



# Wildlands Network

## Testimony in Support of SB0635 – The Maryland Connectivity and Crossings Act Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee 3/4/2025

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

I am submitting this testimony on behalf of 30 organizations in strong support of [SB0635](#), the Maryland Connectivity and Crossings Act. This legislation represents a critical step forward in addressing the mounting challenges of wildlife-vehicle collisions, habitat fragmentation, and transportation safety.

### Enhancing Public Safety and Reducing Costs

Each year, Maryland experiences nearly [33,000 reported deer-vehicle collisions](#), resulting in substantial economic and human costs. Between 2012 and 2021, [14 Marylanders lost their lives](#) due to wildlife-related crashes, and the financial burden of these incidents exceeds [\\$100 million annually](#). Insurance companies have incurred more than [\\$500 million in losses](#) since 2021 from such collisions, and a [recently released study](#) on the effects of wild animal collisions on premium increases for insurance shows the ways in which those losses can be passed on to Maryland drivers. Proactively investing in wildlife crossings will reduce accidents, protect motorists, and ease the financial burden on taxpayers and insurers.

### Demonstrated Success of Wildlife Crossings

The effectiveness of wildlife crossings is well-documented. In Virginia, the installation of fencing and culverts resulted in a [92% reduction in deer-vehicle collisions](#) at select sites, generating [\\$2.3 million in savings per site](#) within just two years. Similar success stories across the country underscore the cost-effectiveness of these measures. By integrating performance metrics and measurable outcomes into [SB0635](#), we can ensure that Maryland's wildlife crossings are built efficiently and deliver the intended results.

### Laying the Groundwork for Future Investment

The passage of this bill is critical to ensuring Maryland is prepared to address wildlife-vehicle collisions and habitat connectivity in a strategic, coordinated way. By establishing the Wildlife Connectivity Fund, [SB0635](#) creates a dedicated mechanism for supporting wildlife-friendly infrastructure, allowing the state to proactively invest in solutions rather than reacting to costly collisions and habitat fragmentation. While this bill does not allocate any funding directly, the fund provides the opportunity to gather private donations. It also lays the groundwork to manage

future state investment, public/private partnership funding, and federal funding to advance priority projects as resources become available.

Additionally, this bill formalizes collaboration between state agencies, local governments, and conservation experts, ensuring that Maryland has a clear roadmap for identifying and implementing effective wildlife crossings. With growing development pressures and increasing road expansion, [SB0635](#) lays the foundation for long-term, cost-effective infrastructure solutions that enhance both public safety and ecological connectivity.

## **Advancing Ecological Connectivity and Sustainable Development**

Wildlife habitat fragmentation is a growing concern as Maryland's population expands and pressures from land development increase. Studies have shown that species such as the wood turtle—a Species of Greatest Conservation Need—are facing [severe declines due to road mortality](#). This bill will help counteract these threats by requiring counties and municipalities to incorporate wildlife movement and connectivity considerations into their comprehensive land use planning efforts. Providing local governments with up-to-date data and best practices will lead to smarter, more sustainable development decisions that balance growth with conservation.

The Maryland Connectivity and Crossings Act is a practical, science-backed solution to a pressing public safety and conservation issue. By passing this legislation, Maryland will protect motorists, reduce economic losses, conserve imperiled wildlife, and secure both private and federal funding that will yield long-term benefits for our communities and natural heritage. I urge you to support [SB0635](#).

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Misty Boos  
U.S. Conservation Policy Manager  
434-906-9861  
[www.wildlandsnetwork.org](http://www.wildlandsnetwork.org)

### Organizations Signed on in support of the Maryland Connectivity and Crossings Act

American Rivers  
Association of Forest Industries, Inc.  
Audubon Mid-Atlantic  
Audubon Society of Central Maryland  
Baltimore Green Space  
Calico Fields Environmental Education  
Catoctin Land Trust  
Center for Large Landscape Conservation  
Climate Change Working Group of  
Frederick County  
Climate Communications Coalition

Eastern Shore Land Conservancy  
Endangered Species Coalition  
Forever Maryland  
Harford Land Trust  
Hunters of Maryland, LLC  
Indivisible HoCoMD  
Maryland Ornithological Society  
Maryland State Grange  
Maryland Votes for Animals  
National Aquarium  
National Parks Conservation Association

National Wildlife Federation  
Potomac Conservancy  
Queen Anne's Conservation Association  
Scenic Rivers Land Trust  
Sierra Club

Susquehannock Wildlife Society  
Vernal Pool Partners  
Wild Potomac  
Wildlands Network