

February 28, 2025

Re: SB0635—Wildlife Protections and Highway Crossings

Testimony of Natalie Dickter
Silver Spring, Maryland

Dear Senator Lewis Young,

I hereby submit my written testimony IN FAVOR OF legislation supporting Wildlife Protections and Highway Crossings.

After watching an interview of Ben Goldfarb, author of *Crossings: How Road Ecology Is Shaping the Future of Our Planet*, in which Mr. Goldfarb mentioned that “Maryland is doing great things” in this area, I became interested in helping to get this legislation passed.

I am a Certified Maryland Master Naturalist and also hold a Certificate of Accomplishment in Natural History Field Studies. My coursework leading to these certifications was sponsored by Nature Forward (formerly named Audubon Naturalist Society), located in Chevy Chase, MD. I am a long-time volunteer at Nature Forward, and since 2019 I am a volunteer for the National Park Service, leading tours of Theodore Roosevelt Island in Washington, DC.

As Mr. Goldfarb discusses in his book:

“While roads are so ubiquitous they're practically invisible to us, wild animals experience them as entirely alien forces of death and disruption. A million animals are killed by cars each day in the US alone, but ... the harms of highways extend far beyond roadkill. Creatures are losing their ability to migrate in search of food and mates.”

In Maryland and in other states across the country, the results of responsible road ecology have already produced optimistic results for animals—and for people injured or killed when they hit a large animal on a highway.

I thank you for introducing this bill, and I hope to see its passage in the 2025 General Assembly legislative session.

Thank you,
Natalie Dickter