

May 11, 2021

The Honorable Tom Carper
Chairman
Senate Environment & Public Works Committee
410 Dirksen SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Senate Environment & Public Works Committee
456 Dirksen SOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairman Carper and Ranking Member Capito:

The undersigned groups write to you on behalf of millions of American hunters and anglers, outdoors enthusiasts, and natural resource professionals. We do so to express our strong support for bipartisan wildlife crossing measures advanced by the Environment and Public Works Committee during the 116th Congress.

Our organizations greatly appreciated the pragmatic approach that drove inclusion of provisions to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions and enhance fish and wildlife habitat connectivity within the America's Transportation Infrastructure Act (ATIA) of 2019, and the Committee's subsequent unanimous approval of the bill. As you work to develop legislation to reauthorize surface transportation programs in the 117th Congress, we once again encourage the inclusion of the full range of these thoughtful measures within Section 1125 of the committee-approved legislation.

Beyond the critically important pilot program targeted to state, tribal and local authorities, the ATIA ensured fish and wildlife crossing and habitat connectivity projects would be eligible for funding through existing transportation programs including the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects, and the Bridge Investment Program. This eligibility is important because it allows fish and wildlife impacts to be addressed and funded as part of broader transportation projects. Further, Section 1125 of the ATIA included a comprehensive approach to reducing wildlife collisions and improving habitat connectivity. The legislation contained several key provisions updating and standardizing voluntary data collection on collision and carcass data across the National Highway System. The bill required a study of reduction strategies and methods for improving connectivity and would provide states with guidance on best practices for mitigation efforts. Each of these measures are key in improving identification of high-priority project areas and targeting of funds to projects with the most immediate need for human safety and wildlife health for years to come. With all of this in mind, our organizations were eager to support inclusion of Section 1125 in the broader ATIA.

Wildlife roadway collisions have become a tragic fact of life across America, especially for those living in rural areas, with over one million accidents reported annually. In addition to threats to human safety, each year these events result in millions of dollars in damages and lost wildlife value, having a ripple effect that extends beyond the outdoor economy. We have an opportunity before us to invest in our roadways in a manner that minimizes these costly events, improves the safety of systems of roads and highways for motorists and wildlife alike, and supports jobs and local economies.

Sincerely,

American Woodcock Society
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Boone and Crockett Club
California Waterfowl Association
Camp Fire Club of America
Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation

Council to Advance Hunting and the Shooting Sports
Dallas Safari Club
Delta Waterfowl
Ducks Unlimited
Houston Safari Club
Izaak Walton League of America
Masters of Foxhounds Association
Mule Deer Foundation
National Association of Forest Service Retirees
National Bobwhite Conservation Initiative
National Deer Alliance
National Shooting Sports Foundation
National Wild Turkey Federation
National Wildlife Federation
National Wildlife Refuge Association
North American Falconers Association
North American Grouse Partnership
Orion: The Hunter's Institute
Pheasants Forever
Pope and Young Club
Public Lands Foundation
Quail Forever
Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Ruffed Grouse Society
Safari Club International
Texas Wildlife Association
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
The Wildlife Society
Wild Sheep Foundation
Wildlife Forever
Wildlife Management Institute