

ARC Solutions, Wildlands Network, Center for Large Landscape Conservation, Endangered Species Coalition, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Humane Society Legislative Fund

Recently Passed Bipartisan Infrastructure Package Provides Critical Funding to Reduce Wildlife-Vehicle Collisions

WASHINGTON, D.C. (November 5, 2021) — Marking an important step to safeguard both people and wildlife, the bipartisan infrastructure package that the U.S. Congress passed today includes \$350 million to construct wildlife road crossings. These structures reconnect important habitat and allow animals to pass safely over or under roadways, avoiding traffic. The legislation also makes projects to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions eligible for funding under other transportation programs. The provisions in this legislation will help safeguard biodiversity while stimulating the U.S. economy, mitigating climate impacts, and reducing highway fatalities.

Reported collisions between motorists and wildlife cause more than 200 human fatalities and over 26,000 injuries each year, at an annual cost to Americans of over \$8 billion. More than one million large animals are killed annually by motorists on U.S. roads—roughly one every 26 seconds. In West Virginia, ranked first in the nation, there is a one in 37 chance that residents will hit an animal every year. [Numerous research studies show](#) that wildlife crossing structures and fencing that guide animals over or under our nation’s highways are highly effective, reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions by up to 97%.

With one in five species in the U.S. at risk of extinction, [biodiversity loss and the related disruption of natural wildlife habitats are among the nation’s greatest conservation challenges, especially in the face of climate change](#). Connecting habitats and facilitating wildlife movement by building highway crossing structures enables species to migrate, access resources for survival, and better adapt to changing landscapes and climate.

The [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) includes a five-year reauthorization of federal surface transportation programs. Some of the key wildlife provisions in the transportation component of the infrastructure package are as follows:

- \$350 million in dedicated funding for wildlife-vehicle collision reduction projects from a competitive grant program; and
- The option for state and federal agencies to utilize other program dollars for projects that improve habitat connectivity; and
- Training opportunities and research and data support to assist states to more effectively study wildlife-vehicle conflict and prioritize needed projects.

Over the past several years, nine states—including New Mexico, Oregon, Colorado, Florida, [Virginia](#), and New Hampshire—have enacted habitat connectivity legislation. An additional six states have introduced similar legislation and/or issued executive orders to protect wildlife corridors. Similarly, many Tribal Nations have been working for more than a decade to identify and protect wildlife movement on their

lands. However, while states and Tribal Nations continue to seek ways to protect wildlife movement and build wildlife crossings, funding to implement these efforts has been inadequate. The new funding opportunities in the infrastructure bill will support state, tribal and federal efforts to protect motorists and allow wildlife to safely cross highways.

“This legislation is a critical step to make our roads safer for both people and wildlife, especially in the face of climate change,” said **Susan Holmes, Federal Policy Director at Wildlands Network**. “By investing in wildlife road crossings and providing funds for states and tribes to protect wildlife corridors, this bill will safeguard biodiversity and protect motorists while rebuilding our infrastructure. This represents the first time there is dedicated funding for wildlife crossings in the federal transportation bill. Wildlands Network thanks the members of the House who have championed these important wildlife crossing provisions.”

“Unlike so many issues we face today, we know that there are proven solutions to making our roadways safer for people and wildlife,” said **Renee Callahan, Executive Director of ARC Solutions**. “Almost 10 years ago, a [survey](#) of close to 500 state and federal transportation agency representatives identified funding as the #1 barrier to making a national investment in wildlife crossing structures. Passage of today’s bill, which addresses that obstacle by dedicating \$350 million in funding for wildlife infrastructure, is a crucial tipping point in improving human safety, reducing wildlife mortality, restoring connectivity, and creating jobs. I hope you will join me in celebrating this landmark act.”

“Nobody wants to experience the pain of hitting an animal with their car—worse if the animal is a threatened or endangered species—or risk injury or even death to themselves,” stated **Leda Huta, Executive Director of the Endangered Species Coalition**. “This common-sense policy provision reduces that risk. In doing so, it benefits not only our natural world, which needs help, but it improves the quality of life of people.”

“By funding wildlife crossing structures, the bipartisan infrastructure bill creates safer passage for both people and animals across our nation’s highways,” said **Gary Tabor, President of the Center for Large Landscape Conservation**. “The legislation is a smart economic investment and positions the U.S. as an international leader in habitat connectivity and biodiversity conservation. The measures to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions will save taxpayers money, create jobs in green infrastructure, and safeguard North America’s remarkable wildlife migrations for generations to come.”

“Wildlife crossings make good sense from every perspective” said **Kate Wall, Senior Legislative Manager for IFAW**. “They are a cost-effective solution to the \$8 billion-dollar annual problem of wildlife-vehicle collisions, so they are a win for taxpayers. Even more important, they save lives – both of animals and human beings, so they are a win for biodiversity and communities across the United States. We applaud Congress for including these common-sense provisions in their bipartisan infrastructure bill.”

“Roadkill’ has sadly become a mundane fact of everyday life, but wildlife-vehicle collisions injure and kill millions of animals, claim the lives of over 200 people, and account for more than \$8 billion in damages every year,” said **Sara Amundson, president of the Humane Society Legislative Fund**. “We have the means to provide wildlife with safe passage over and around our roadways, and we are thrilled to see the Senate include substantial investment in wildlife crossings projects. With similar language in both the House and Senate transportation bills, Congress has made it clear that these wildlife-based transportation reforms are of crucial significance to public safety and animal well-being.”

Resources

- A list of wildlife crossing and road mitigation job creation projects that would benefit from federal infrastructure and stimulus funding can be found [here](#).
- A list of each state's current habitat connectivity policies can be found [here](#).
- [**OVERVIEW: Wildlife Crossing Opportunities in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**](#)
- [**H.R. 3684: Summary of the wildlife-related highway provisions included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act**](#)
- [**1-PAGER: \\$350M Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program**](#)
- [**INFOGRAPHIC: Roadways & Wildlife**](#)
- [**INTERACTIVE STORYMAP: The Wonderful World of Wildlife Crossings**](#)
- [**FAQs: Frequently Asked Questions about Wildlife Crossings**](#)
- [**VIDEO: \(Re\)Connecting Wild: Restoring Safe Passage**](#) WARNING: THIS VIDEO CONTAINS GRAPHIC IMAGES; PLEASE USE VIEW DISCRETION.
- [**REPORT: Highway Crossing Structures for Wildlife: Opportunities for Improving Driver and Animal Safety**](#)
- [**REPORT: Innovative Strategies to Reduce the Cost of Effective Wildlife Overpasses**](#)

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