# [***HOUSE PASSES PRO-WILDLIFE INFRASTRUCTURE BILL***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6326-2561-DYTH-G00X-00000-00&context=1516831)

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The following information was ***released by Defenders of Wildlife***:

After months of negotiations, today, the U.S House of Representatives passed its bi-partisan infrastructure bill, INVEST in America Act, H.R.3684, that includes several pro-wildlife provisions, most notably investments to establish a national wildlife corridor protection program.

"This bill is truly a win for both people and wildlife," said Curt Chaffin senior government relations representative at Defenders of Wildlife. "Habitat destruction is one of the main drivers of the biodiversity crisis. Investments that address habitat connectivity and protect wildlife and the places they call home are an essential part of the solution. These wildlife infrastructure provisions will protect biodiversity, increase public safety and create local jobs."

The bill also includes critically important provisions that Defenders has been advocating for in the last several years. It establishes the Western Riverside National Wildlife Refuge in California and increases funding for the Legacy Roads and Trails program and the development of Wildlife Crossings.

Urban refuges, such as Western Riverside County National Wildlife Refuge, have proven to be successful in preventing habitat fragmentation. This new refuge, which is also, one of the nation's largest urban refuges, would create enduring outcomes that benefit humans and nature alike. This bill will preserve the remaining intact habitat for imperiled wildlife while also providing more equitable access to nature in this highly urbanized region both of which are key components of state and national 30x30 goals.

Habitat connectivity and the movement of native species are essential for ecosystem resilience. While establishing a national system of wildlife corridors to improve large landscape connectivity, the bill funds approximately $75 million per year for wildlife corridors around the country. Building off of previous legislation, the INVEST in America Act, also invests $400 million in the Wildlife Crossings Program. The program would send grants to states, ***tribes***, local communities, federal agencies, and others to construct crossings and improve habitat connectivity and crossings like wildlife-friendly highway overpasses.

Aging infrastructure can have disastrous effects on water quality and aquatic wildlife. The Forest Service manages over 40,000 stream crossings for roads; storms, flooding, and erosion often damage or block those crossings. This bill would open up $100 million per year for the Legacy Roads and Trails program (LRT), which has already fixed over 1,000 culverts and would enable the Forest Service to restore hundreds of miles of aquatic habitat. The program would create approximately 1,500 contractor jobs and enable better recreational access to national forests.

With the passage of this historic package in the House of Representatives, the Senate is expected to take up a similar surface transportation bill soon. The Senate Environment and Public Works Committee unanimously approved the Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act last month. The full Senate will soon vote on its bill and negotiate a final package with the House to determine the fate of these pro-wildlife provisions.

Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities. With nearly 2.2 million members and activists, Defenders of Wildlife is a leading advocate for innovative solutions to safeguard our wildlife heritage for generations to come.

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