# [***INFRASTRUCTURE PACKAGE INCLUDES IMPORTANT WINS FOR WILDLIFE***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:606D-YW01-DYTH-G19B-00000-00&context=1516831)

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

The U.S House of Representatives released today its infrastructure bill, the Moving Forward Act. The plan advances The Invest in America Act, recently approved by the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The bill also includes several pro-wildlife provisions, including legislation that would establish a national wildlife corridor protection program and millions of dollars to facilitate wildlife crossings over highways, mitigate harmful roads on national forest lands, and to support the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration's efforts to restore coastal wildlife habitat.

Additionally, the Moving Forward Act includes protections of wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity, drawing from the bipartisan Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act.The bill would grant authority to federal agencies to designate and protect wildlife corridors on federal public lands and waters. Additionally, the corridors legislation creates a $50 million grant program to support private landowners, ***tribes***, states and local communities to protect wildlife corridors This bill provides specific support and funding for ***tribes*** to protect wildlife corridors on tribal lands. The legislation would establish a shared federal wildlife corridor database as a resource for federal agencies, states, ***tribes***, landowners, and private citizens to support corridor conservation. Additionally, the package includes $75 million in annual funding over four years for vital wildlife crossings like highway overpasses.

The bill would address the harmful effects that some roads have on watersheds, water supplies and wildlife habitat by supporting the Forest Service legacy roads and trails program. At 370,000 miles, the U.S. Forest Service's road system is over-sized and underfunded. A subset of the roads are falling apart, no longer needed, and depositing sediment into streams crucial for imperiled fish, migratory birds, and other wildlife. The bill authorizes the program with $50 million in funding for 5 years which will help to safeguard drinking water, imperiled species and taxpayers' checkbooks.

Another key provision within the infrastructure bill would authorize a $3 billion grant program for coastal restoration. Watershed and coastal restoration projects have immediate positive impacts for local communities, wildlife and water quality, including long-term benefits for advancing biodiversity and building resilience. For example, numerous national wildlife refuges are located along coasts and waterways and serve a crucial role buffering coastal areas and communities from climate change-induced sea level rise, hurricanes and other storms, protecting shorelines, decreasing erosion, and sequestering carbon.Economic activity generated by restoration activities is well documented, producing between 13 and 30 jobs for every $1 million invested. Restoration of coastal wetlands can create as many as 29 jobs for every $1 million invested.

Jamie Rappaport Clark, president and CEO of ***Defenders of Wildlife***, ***issued*** the following statement:

"The Moving Forward Act includes important wins for fish, wildlife and plants contending with increasing habitat fragmentation and climate change. Funding for wildlife infrastructure, like corridors, will also help create jobs and stimulate economies in communities across the country. The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act has had bipartisan support in Congress, and we are hopeful that this provision will now become law.

"Authorization of the U.S. Forest Service's legacy roads and trails program has been a long time in the making and is a victory for people who love the outdoors and threatened and endangered species. Confronting the problem of obsolete and decaying roads and trails will help wildlife, taxpayers and the 66 million Americans who rely our National Forests for clean drinking water.

"Restoring coastal wetlands and imperiled wildlife habitat is good for wildlife, communities and the economy."

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