# [***LANDMARK BIPARTISAN LEGISLATION TO PROTECT WILDLIFE CORRIDORS PASSES THE U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:608P-58F1-JCBF-S02T-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

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

Marking a significant step for U.S. wildlife conservation and biodiversity protection, the bipartisan Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act along with $300 million for wildlife crossings and provisions to support wildlife road crossings passed the House floor as part of H.R. 2 the Moving Forward Act stimulus package. These important provisions will both stimulate the U.S. economy and support rural jobs, while also reducing highway fatalities and safeguarding wildlife.

With one in five U.S. species at risk of extinction and nearly 60% of the natural vegetation lost in the U.S. lower 48 states, biodiversity loss and disruption of natural wildlife habitats is one of our nation's greatest conservation challenges. Connecting habitats through corridors and crossings enables wildlife to access resources for survival, and to migrate and better adapt to changing landscapes and climate.

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 more than $8 billion. More than 1-2 million large animals are killed annually by motorists on U.S. roads roughly one every 26 seconds. 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%.

The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act grants authority to key federal agencies to develop a National Wildlife Corridor System on federal public land and creates a $50 million per year Wildlife Movement Grant Program to incentivize the protection of wildlife corridors by state and tribal agencies and interested private landowners on non-federal lands.

The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act, which was introduced by Representatives Don Beyer (D-VA) and Vern Buchanan (R-FL), also contains the Tribal Wildlife Corridors Act introduced by Representative Ruben Gallego (D-AR) . A companion bill in the Senate has been introduced by Senator Tom Udall.

The Moving Forward Act also includes $300 million in dedicated funding for wildlife crossing projects from the National Highway Performance Program as well as other important provisions to reduce wildlife vehicle collisions. These provisions complement language that unanimously passed the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works with bipartisan support last July. Such funding will support state, tribal and federal efforts to construct overpasses and underpasses to protect motorists and allow wildlife to safely cross highways.

"Protecting wildlife corridors and crossings is a commonsense way to stimulate our economy and support rural jobs while protecting biodiversity," said Susan Holmes, Federal Policy Director for Wildlands Network, a non-profit conservation organization working to establish a continental system of wildlife corridors. We thank Representatives Don Beyer (D-VA), Vern Buchanan(R-FL) and Gallego (D-AR) for their leadership in simultaneously protecting both jobs and America's wildlife. "From elk to grizzlies to the beautiful monarch butterfly, wildlife needs to move across the landscape to survive. In the face of climate change, protecting wildlife corridors will ensure America's treasured wildlife will survive for generations to come."

The bill is supported by nationally recognized scientists, including renowned biologist Dr. E.O. Wilson, recreation companies including Patagonia and more than 220 prominent NGOs nationwide.

Wildlife corridor and crossing protection is a conservation strategy that is being used successfully across the country. Last year alone, a dozen states pursued wildlife corridor protection legislation, including Florida, Wyoming, Mississippi, New Hampshire, Oregon, New Mexico, Utah and Virginia. While states are initiating wildlife corridor and crossing protection, funding to implement these efforts is sorely needed. A list of wildlife crossing and road mitigation job creation projects that would benefit from federal infrastructure and stimulus funding can be found here. The Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act would also benefit ***tribes*** and rural communities through technical support and funding for wildlife corridors and crossings. on companies including Patagonia and more than 220 prominent NGOs nationwide.

"One of the foreseeable environmental crises of the future is the extinction of our native fauna and flora by careless human activity. Passing the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act as part of the stimulus package is an effective way to avoid this tragic event."

Dr. Edward O. Wilson

"Patagonia's business depends on healthy natural places where people can recreate and wildlife can thrive. Our outdoor industry contributes 7.6 million jobs and $887 billion to the American economy, and in times like these we need legislation like the Moving Forward Act. This bill invests in wildlife corridor infrastructure to supports healthy lands, wildlife and communities. We thank the leadership of Representatives Beyer, Buchanan and Gallego in protecting our lands, waters, and wildlife while also boosting our economy and jobs."

Alison Huyett, Environmental Campaigns Manager, Patagonia

"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.

Jamie Rappaport Clark, President and CEO, Defenders of Wildlife

"Habitat fragmentation is a major driver of species decline and an impediment to recovering imperiled wildlife. We thank the bill sponsors and supporters for recognizing the important role of corridors in helping our fish and wildlife migrate and move about the landscape."

Leda Huta, Executive Director of the Endangered Species Coalition

"Every congressional bill is an opportunity to debate the importance of animal protection in our society and today the House "moved us forward" by including and passing language to create a National Wildlife Corridors System and related grant programs in their major infrastructure package. Providing for the safety of wildlife in our transportation systems and infrastructure is a critical component of bringing our infrastructure into the 21st century. We thank the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act sponsors for their sound leadership to ensure these critical animal welfare and safety provisions pass the House, and we urge the Senate to swiftly follow suit."

Sara Amundson, President, Humane Society Legislative Fund

"Habitat loss and fragmentation is the top driver of biodiversity loss around the globe. Wildlife corridors and crossings not only help to maintain healthy wildlife populations, they also protect human health and wellbeing by preventing collisions and protecting the ecosystems upon which we all depend. We applaud Representatives Beyer, Buchanan, and Gallego for their leadership on these important initiatives."

Kate Wall, Senior Legislative Manager at the International Fund for Animal Welfare

"Climate change is happening now and the effects are threatening some of our country's most iconic national park wildlife. Park ecosystems are changing more every day, and migratory wildlife have long been challenged by roads and other obstacles as they move in and out of parks. The Moving Forward Act is a critical step in collaboratively addressing these challenges and protecting national park wildlife. NPCA commends the many members of the House of Representatives who have sponsored, cosponsored and advocated for the innovative wildlife-focused portions of the bill."

Bart Melton, Wildlife Program Director, National Parks Conservation Association

"This act confirms America's bipartisan commitment to ensuring that both people and nature thrive in a changing world. Wildlife crossings are cost-effective solutions that keep people and animals safer on our highways, and funding to secure and restore habitat in critical corridors will allow us to enjoy abundant wildlife populations for generations to come."

Kim Trotter, U.S. Program Director, Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative

"By supporting the creation of much-needed wildlife crossing structures and safeguarding critical wildlife corridors, the Moving Forward Act protects people, economies, and wildlifenow and into the future. Connected habitat and unimpeded routes of migration are necessary to sustain our nation's wildlife heritage. Wildlife need to move to fulfill their survival needsto feed, to reproduce, and to seek refuge. This legislation passed by the House today positions the U.S. as an international leader in habitat connectivity and wildlife conservation."

Gary Tabor, President of the Center for Large Landscape Conservation

Defenders of Wildlife is dedicated to the protection of all native animals and plants in their natural communities. With over 1.8 million members and activists, Defenders of Wildlife is a leading advocate for innovative solutions to safeguard our wildlife heritage for generations to come. For more information, visit defenders.org/newsroom and follow us on Twitter @Defenders.

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