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Governor Signs Landmark Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act into Law

Annapolis, MD – A major victory for Maryland's wildlife and residents: Today, Governor Moore officially signed the Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act ([HB0731](#)) into law, a groundbreaking piece of legislation that will significantly improve road safety and protect Maryland's wildlife populations. The Act establishes essential frameworks for safer wildlife passage, leading the way for a more connected and resilient state.

The Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act, supported by over [32 diverse organizations](#), builds on earlier momentum, including a [\\$387,424](#) federal Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program grant to the Maryland State Highway Administration, which funded the development of a comprehensive statewide plan for wildlife crossings.

Delegate Sheila Ruth and Senator Karen Lewis Young, who spearheaded the bill's introduction, emphasized the importance of the new law in reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions. Maryland faces nearly [33,000](#) deer-vehicle collisions annually, with associated costs exceeding [\\$100 million](#) each year. The new law will formalize the Maryland Connectivity Coalition, which will advance wildlife crossing projects, establish the Wildlife Connectivity Fund to support future efforts, and ensure that wildlife habitat connectivity is considered in land-use planning.

As Maryland's population grows and with [more development and traffic expected by 2050](#), the demand for safer roads and protected wildlife corridors is greater than ever. This new law is a vital step in ensuring Maryland's future is one where both people and wildlife can thrive together.

[Here is a link to the fact sheet](#) about the Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act.

Testimonials from Sponsoring Legislators and Supporting Organizations:

“The Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act was truly a collaborative effort, and I'm thrilled that it passed after two years of work. This legislation will formalize planning to protect drivers and wildlife and connect wildlife habitats fragmented by roads. I'm grateful to the partners who worked with us to make it happen, including multiple state agencies and nonprofits like Wildlands Network.” — **Delegate Sheila Ruth**

“After two sessions, I am delighted that we are finally making some real progress towards mitigation efforts in minimizing animal-related vehicle accidents. The legislation

passed this year will help to build on our knowledge of best practices as we strive to make our roads safer for both humans and wildlife.” — **Senator Karen Lewis Young**

“Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act provides a crucial framework to plan for safer roads and better wildlife movement. By bringing together key partners, the law sets the stage for long-term solutions to protect both people and wildlife as development pressures increase.” — **Misty Boos, U.S. Conservation Policy Manager at Wildlands Network**

“This important bill will be one more tool for Maryland to keep the state’s diverse habitats connected and contiguous, providing safe refuge for the state’s birds and wildlife. It will also help keep our landscapes intact so we can all benefit from the economic, cultural, and climate benefits of protected ecosystems. We thank Del. Ruth for her leadership on this issue.” — **Jim Brown, Director of Policy at Audubon Mid-Atlantic**

“Maryland’s quick population growth has a dramatic impact on wildlife habitat and ecosystem integrity. The Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act allows certain habitats to be reconnected, reduces fatal road collisions, protects imperiled wildlife, and positions Maryland to better leverage future federal funding.”

— **Sonia Demiray, Executive Director of the Climate Communications Coalition**

“National Parks Conservation Association was proud to support HB0731 and SB635, the Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act. Protections like wildlife crossings are essential for the safety of black bears, salamanders, and countless other species that thrive in Maryland’s national parks and roam outside their boundaries. Whether these animals are migrating to seasonal habitats or exploring new areas in search of food or mates, species need the ability to move across broader park landscapes to maintain healthy park wildlife populations. From Catoctin Mountain Park to the Baltimore Washington Parkway, human, parks, and wildlife deserve to co-exist peacefully. This legislation moves Maryland towards ensuring that coexistence can continue for years to come.”

— **Kyle Hart, National Parks Conservation Association Mid-Atlantic Program Manager**

“In addition to restoring and conserving critical habitat and reconnecting wildlife corridors, creating safe road crossings is essential to ensuring that Maryland’s wildlife is protected from increased human development and climate change. We are grateful to Governor Moore for signing this critical measure that will reduce the significant costs of wildlife collisions to Maryland drivers and passengers, local and state government, and

the wildlife that we treasure so much.” — **Stacey Volodin, Humane World Maryland State Director**

“As our planet and our state continue to face the pressures of growth and development while striving to balance the needs of nature, the state has responded with bold leadership. From setting a goal to conserve 40% of its lands by 2040, to updating the mapping of Maryland’s Habitat Connectivity Network, and now with the passage of the Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act, Maryland is taking vital steps to protect wildlife and preserve the natural corridors they depend on. Chesapeake Conservancy thanks Governor Wes Moore for signing this important legislation, and we commend bill sponsors Senators Lewis Young and James Rosapepe and Delegate Sheila Ruth for their leadership.” — **EJ Amyot, Interim President and CEO, Chesapeake Conservancy**

“Vernal pools are unique backyard ecosystems and the only places wood frogs and mole salamanders can breed. These wondrous species also need safe passage from their terrestrial habitats to these breeding pools, so the Wildlife Connectivity and Crossings Act will be a life saver.” — **Mark Southerland PhD, Vernal Pool Partners**

“Connected—and protected—habitats are a win for both wildlife and communities. Scenic Rivers is proud to have supported this legislation and grateful to Wildlands Network, Senator Lewis Young, and Delegate Ruth for their leadership.” — **Josh Falk, Executive Director, Scenic Rivers Land Trust**

"This bill will make roads safer for drivers and wildlife! Many thanks to Senator Karen Lewis Young and Delegate Sheila Ruth for their sponsorship and for the coordination and support of Misty Boos, the Wildlands Network’s U.S. Conservation Policy Manager. The Wildlands Network was instrumental in facilitating the effort to pass this legislation." — **Karen Russell, Founder, Climate Change Working Group of Frederick County**

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