

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE
PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF WILDLIFE
CORRIDORS**

2020 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Mike Schultz

Senate Sponsor: _____

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This resolution relates to protecting wildlife and improving motorist safety.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ acknowledges that healthy wildlife and landscapes are crucial to Utah's quality of life and economy;
- ▶ acknowledges that protecting wildlife corridors will improve herd vitality of big game species;
- ▶ acknowledges and respects the rights of private landowners;
- ▶ acknowledges that the United States is losing biodiversity;
- ▶ acknowledges that wildlife-vehicle collisions pose serious safety risks to motorists and wildlife and that states, including Utah, that implement wildlife crossings to improve motorist safety and protect wildlife corridors have seen a decrease in wildlife vehicle collisions;
- ▶ acknowledges current efforts to protect wildlife corridors and road safety;
- ▶ acknowledges the need for the protection and restoration of migratory routes for wildlife through the Division of Wildlife Resources' Utah's Wildlife Migration Initiative;



- 28 ▶ acknowledges that the federal government has initiated programs and awarded
29 grants to protect wildlife corridors for big game animals;
30 ▶ expresses the state's continued support for wildlife corridors and road safety; and
31 ▶ encourages studies related to wildlife migration corridors within the state.

Special Clauses:

33 None

35 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

36 WHEREAS, healthy plant and animal life are necessary to the quality of life in Utah
37 and to maintain vibrant and balanced landscapes to support outdoor recreational activities such
38 as hunting, fishing, animal watching, and similar activities;

39 WHEREAS, the Office of Outdoor Recreation reports that outdoor recreation
40 contributes more than \$12.3 billion to the economy, employs more than 110,000 people, and is
41 the primary driver behind the tourism industry;

42 WHEREAS, protecting wildlife corridors has been shown to improve herd vitality of
43 big game species that are critical in supporting Utah's outdoor recreation economy;

44 WHEREAS, the rights of private landowners are recognized and respected and private
45 landowners should not be forced to participate in any state or local initiatives regarding the
46 protection of wildlife corridors, but instead the state and local governments should incentivize
47 private landowners to participate;

48 WHEREAS, 1 in 5 species is at risk of extinction in the United States and Utah is home
49 to many threatened or endangered species and to sensitive species;

50 WHEREAS, over the 14-year period from 1992 thru 2005, the Utah Highway Patrol
51 reported to the Utah Department of Transportation's Traffic and Safety Office that:

52 • nearly 30,500 wildlife-vehicle collisions occurred during that period,
53 most reported being deer, elk, and moose;

54 • the number of reported injury accidents during this period was 2,030;
55 and

56 • the injury accidents include 18 reported deaths due to accidents with
57 wildlife;

58 WHEREAS, states, including Utah, that implement wildlife crossings to improve

motorist safety and protect wildlife corridors have seen a decrease in wildlife vehicle collisions by 40% to 90%;

WHEREAS, the Division of Wildlife Resources and the Utah Department of Transportation through the creation of a Wildlife Conflict Prevention Team are incorporating wildlife migration patterns, crash data, and wildlife carcass data in highway corridor planning to improve roadway safety for wildlife and motorists;

WHEREAS, the Utah Department of Transportation continues to install wildlife fencing, has constructed a wildlife overpass and 50 wildlife underpasses statewide, continues to identify potential locations for additional wildlife crossings, and has implemented new monitoring technology to assess the effectiveness of existing crossings and better warn motorists when wildlife is present;

WHEREAS, there is a need for the protection and restoration of migratory routes for wildlife through the Division of Wildlife Resources' Utah's Wildlife Migration Initiative; and

WHEREAS, the current administration has initiated programs and awarded grants to protect wildlife corridors for big game animals through United States Department of Interior, Secretarial Order 3362:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein, urges continued state investment in wildlife connectivity and encourages state and local governments to adopt policies to protect and restore wildlife connectivity and migration corridors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and Governor encourage the Division of Wildlife Resources, universities, and others with expertise in the wildlife area to study where wildlife migration corridors exist within the state and how best to protect these corridors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Utah League of Cities and Towns and the Utah Association of Counties and that these entities be requested to provide access to the resolution to the relevant planning commissions and highway authorities.