CONCURRENT RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE
PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF WILDLIFE
CORRIDORS

2020 GENERAL SESSION
STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Mike Schultz

Senate Sponsor: David P. Hinkins

Cosponsors: Timothy D. Hawkes Keven J. Stratton
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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 fish and wildlife corridors will improve herd vitality of big game species and preserve connectivity of fisheries;
- 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
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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;

acknowledges that the federal government has initiated programs and awarded grants to protect wildlife corridors for big game animals;

expresses the state's continued support for fish and wildlife corridors and road safety; and

encourages studies related to wildlife migration corridors within the state.

Special Clauses:

None

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

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

WHEREAS, the Office of Outdoor Recreation reports that outdoor recreation contributes more than $5.5 billion to the economy, employs more than 75,000 people, and is the primary driver behind the tourism industry;

WHEREAS, protecting fish and wildlife migration corridors has been shown to improve herd vitality of big game species, and preserving connectivity is crucial to the long-term resiliency of Utah's fisheries, both being critical in supporting Utah's outdoor recreation economy;

WHEREAS, the rights of private landowners are recognized and respected and private landowners should not be forced to participate in any state or local initiatives regarding the protection of wildlife corridors, but instead the state and local governments should incentivize private landowners to participate;
WHEREAS, 1 in 5 species is at risk of extinction in the United States and Utah is home
to many threatened or endangered species and to sensitive species;
WHEREAS, over the 14-year period from 1992 thru 2005, the Utah Highway Patrol
reported to the Utah Department of Transportation's Traffic and Safety Office that:

- nearly 30,500 wildlife-vehicle collisions occurred during that period,
most reported being deer, elk, and moose;
- the number of reported injury accidents during this period was 2,030;
and
- the injury accidents include 18 reported deaths due to accidents with
wildlife;
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,

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 intact fish and wildlife connectivity and migration corridors and promote road safety.

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 and enhance 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.