



March 24, 2023

Memorandum of Support S.4198/A.4243

S.4198 (Comrie)/A.4243 (Carroll): An act to enact the "New York wildlife crossing act"; to direct the Department of Transportation to identify sites along all highways, thruways, and parkways in the state where wildlife crossings are most needed to increase public safety and improve habitat connectivity; and to create a priority list of wildlife crossing opportunity areas where federal grant monies may be available to implement the top five projects identified

This bill will direct the NYS Department of Transportation ("DOT") to identify sites along all highways, thruways, and parkways where wildlife crossings are most needed to increase public safety and improve habitat connectivity. The bill will also direct DOT to create a priority list of wildlife crossing opportunity areas where federal funds could be used for priority projects. Wildlife crossings are structures, such as overpass bridges, underpass tunnels, culverts and directional fencing, that enable wildlife to safely cross roads and other barriers.

Not only will wildlife crossings help to improve public safety by reducing vehicle collisions with wildlife, they will improve the survival rate of wildlife moving throughout, and across the boundaries of, the Adirondack Park. Having safe opportunities for road crossings are critical for many species of wildlife in and around the Adirondack Park that have large territorial ranges, such as moose, deer, bear, wolves, and bobcats. In addition, foxes, fishers, martens, and other smaller species of wildlife, plus reptiles and amphibians, need safe means of passage across large roads that impact their habitat and their ability to search for food and breeding grounds.

Safe crossings that allow wildlife to travel from one location to another is even more important as climate change continues to impact natural habitats and drives wildlife migration, mostly in a north-south direction. One key roadway that needs to be prioritized for wildlife crossings, even though it prevents wildlife travel in an east-west direction, is the Adirondack Northway (I-87) because of its high rate of travel, and its dissection of the Adirondack Park from critical habitat in the northeast.

For all of these reasons, Protect the Adirondacks supports S.4198/A.4243

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