



PRESS RELEASE
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Legislature Passes New York Wildlife Crossings Bill

Legislation directs the Department of Transportation (DOT) to identify sites along highways, thruways and parkways in the state where wildlife crossings are most needed to increase public safety and improve habitat connectivity.

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Albany, NY: The State Assembly and State Senate have both acted to pass the New York Wildlife Crossings Act, which was sponsored by Senator Leroy Comrie and Assembly Member Robert Carroll. The bill requires the Department of Transportation (DOT) to assess roadways “in the state for potential wildlife crossings to improve wildlife habitat connectivity, reduce wildlife vehicle collisions, and increase public safety for New York motorists.” DOT will use its assessment of roadways to create a list of the top ten priority wildlife crossings sites in the state according to an established set of criteria. Additionally, for the top five project sites, DOT will also identify federal grant funds that are available for those projects.

The Biden Administration has made \$350 million dollars available for wildlife crossings as part of the bipartisan Infrastructure Law enacted in 2021. In December 2023, the federal government announced that it had awarded \$110 million dollars of federal funds for wildlife crossings. With the passage of the Wildlife Crossings bill, New York is in a better position to take advantage of the available federal funds.

“This legislation is a milestone for more effective statewide wildlife planning and management in New York. This bill will help to significantly advance wildlife protections. We look forward to the full implementation of this legislation to identify critical wildlife corridors in New York,” said Peter Bauer, Executive Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

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 also improve the survival rate of wildlife moving throughout, and

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across the boundaries of, the Adirondack Park and surrounding areas. 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.

“With the passage of this bill, New York State is well on its way to providing safer passage for wildlife and people traversing the Adirondack Park and other places in the state that have important wildlife corridors. We urge the governor to sign the bill to unlock access to federal infrastructure funds for these crossings,” said Claudia Braymer, Deputy Director of Protect the Adirondacks.

Protect the Adirondacks

Protect the Adirondacks is an IRS-approved non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation and stewardship of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park. Our mission is to protect the Adirondack Park’s wild character for current and future generations. PROTECT pursues this mission through a combination of advocacy, grassroots organizing, independent public oversight, research, water quality monitoring, education, and legal action. Protect the Adirondacks was formed in 2009 as the result of a merger between two long-standing environmental conservation groups in the Adirondack Park, the Resident’s Committee to Protect the Adirondacks (est. 1991) and the Association for the Protection of the Adirondacks (est. 1901).

Protect the Adirondacks is managed by a 22-member Board of Directors of Adirondack leaders with expertise in environmental law, local government, Adirondack environmental and cultural history, state agency management, and small business. Protect the Adirondacks maintains an office in a 100% energy efficient, solar-and wind-powered office in Johnsburg in the central Adirondacks. For more information see www.protectadks.org and @ProtectAdkPark.

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