



STATE OF WASHINGTON

## FREIGHT MOBILITY STRATEGIC INVESTMENT BOARD

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[www.fmsib.wa.gov](http://www.fmsib.wa.gov)

To Whom It May Concern:

The Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board (FMSIB) was created to identify bottlenecks and constraints to safe and efficient freight movement and to recommend and fund solutions to those constraints. FMSIB supports and funds infrastructure investments that further these goals.

State Route 97 in the Okanogan Valley is a key north-south transportation corridor through North Central Washington, traveled by many trucks. The Valley also contains a large deer population, which migrates across the highway frequently. The combination of freight traffic and deer migrating through this narrow corridor results in an epidemic of road kill. On average, 73 deer are killed each year by vehicle collisions along just a 1.5-mile stretch north of Crumbacher Road. In the entire 11 miles, it is estimated that over 350 deer are killed per year.

From the perspective of the Washington Trucking Associations (WTA), "it's about safety, injury prevention, and keeping cost of doing business down. The route is heavily travelled by trucks."

The estimated cost for each vehicle-deer collision averages \$7,180. This includes vehicle repair costs, human injuries, towing, carcass removal/disposal, and accident investigation, as well as the monetary value of the deer. The cost of saving just one injury or even death due to these accidents is priceless. This totals 350 Deer x \$7,180 dollars/deer = \$2.5 million annually in just one 12-mile stretch of highway.

Washington DOT is proposing to improve the highway section by adding two to four underpasses, augmented as needed by fencing, cattle guards or gates, several deer "jump-outs," and "foot-gates."

Crossing structures are immensely useful. Crossings constructed under highways help wildlife safely cross under roads, preventing, on average, 85 percent of all deer-vehicle collisions. They are especially effective when combined with fencing and other aids for funneling wildlife to the underpass (source: Utah State University Report No UT-12.07, May 2012).

Because of the high cost of collisions and disruption to safely transportation freight, FMSIB supports efforts to improve the corridor for wildlife and trucks.



Brian Ziegler  
Director