



Okanogan County Tourism Council

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Visitor Information (888) 431-3080 * www.okanogancountry.com

October 3, 2018

Roger Millard
Secretary of Transportation
Washington State Dept. of Transportation
PO Box 47300
Olympia WA 98504-7300

Subject: Highway 97 Underpass Support

Dear Sir:

The Okanogan County Tourism Council would like to offer our support for the efforts of the Conservation Northwest to get funding for construction of underpass structures on Highway 97 in Okanogan County.

This 12 mile stretch of highway has seen over 350 vehicle-deer collisions each year, it is amazing that no one has yet been killed in an accident. The cost of vehicle repair, emergency medical response, medical costs and carcasses removal, as well as the loss of deer for recreational viewing and hunting is close to \$2 million a year. We believe that something needs to be done to stop this waste of our wildlife and to prevent potentially fatal accidents.

We fully support the efforts of the Safe Passage on Highway 97 Project. The initial installation of three wildlife underpasses with the necessary fencing and cattle guards on the dangerous 4-mile segment will certainly help to create a safer environment for the public and the wildlife in Okanogan County.

From the Canadian Border to Pateros, Highway 97 is federally designated as the Okanogan Trails Scenic Byway. Visitors to our area that travel this beautiful stretch of highway are not expecting mangled deer carcasses and bent fenders as part of the experience to Okanogan Country.

We fully support the efforts of Conservation Northwest and if you need further information, please feel free to contact us at 888 431-3080.

Sincerely,

Teri Leep
Board President