



OKANOGAN COUNTY

Board of Commissioners

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Andy Hoyer
Commissioner District 2
Jim DeTro
Commissioner District 3
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Clerk of the Board

October 30, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

The Board of Okanogan County Commissioners (BOCC) are acutely aware of, and concerned about, high deer kill areas on the state highway system where there is risk of death and injury for motorists, and where vehicle damage amounts to thousands of dollars over time. One area of high collision frequency that is well known to most residents in the Okanogan Valley is North Highway 97 between Riverside and Tonasket. Most commuters along this route have experienced collisions or near misses with deer, and no doubt have observed the results of these frequent accidents

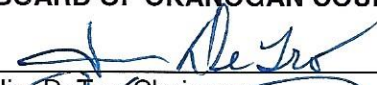
North Highway 97 between Pateros and the Canadian Border at Oroville is a state-designated Scenic Byway branded as the Okanogan Trails Scenic Byway. Substantial investments have been made to promote this byway, and thousands of travelers are attracted to the intrinsic beauty of this reach of Highway 97. Unfortunately, vehicle damage and the sight of deer carcasses strewn about the highway are not a desirable part of that experience. The condition can result in a disincentive to return to the area, and does not bode well when sharing information with other potential visitors. Thus, negative economic impacts are a result.

Okanogan County is also a popular hunting region where hundreds of hunters flock to the area to pursue a declining mule deer population. It is a foregone conclusion that highway deer kill is a significant factor to be blamed for this decline; again, negative economic impacts are apparent. U. S. Highway 97 is a strategic freight corridor where shipments of goods and commodities between the U.S. and Canada. Large trucks often take out two or three deer in a incident, and truck damage is common which affects the bottom line for many businesses as their shipments may be delayed and the cost of shipping has to eventually be affected due to insurance and repairs.

Considering that the overall societal loss reaches into the millions, the BOCC is convinced that the cost of providing a remedy (i.e., wildlife crossings) in the area of concern is well worth the investment. Therefore, the BOCC fully supports the Okanogan Trails Chapter of the Mule Deer Foundation and their partners and supporters in their efforts to establish wildlife crossings in this stretch of State Route 97.

Respectfully,

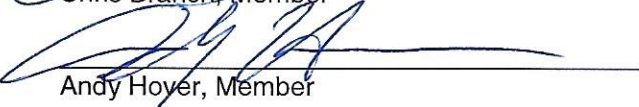
BOARD OF OKANOGAN COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



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