

SUPPORT HB597

Topic: Wildlife Corridor Grant Fund

Bill Patron: Delegate Simonds, Delegate Gardner, Delegate Fowler

OVERVIEW:

This bill establishes the Wildlife Corridor Grant Fund (WCGF) to provide grants for projects that conserve and enhance wildlife corridors and associated crossing infrastructure. The fund is supported by voluntary contributions collected through DMV transactions and income tax filings, and will be administered in coordination with state agencies. Grants may support construction projects, feasibility studies, monitoring, and other initiatives that advance Virginia's Wildlife Corridor Action Plan (WCAP). The fund is non-reverting and has no impact on the state budget.

REASONS TO SUPPORT:

Why Virginia Needs a Wildlife Corridor Grant Fund Now

Promotes Driver Safety

Wildlife crossings reduce vehicle-wildlife collisions by over 96%, making roads safer for drivers and communities.

Saves Virginians' Money

Wildlife collisions cost Virginia \$533 million each year. Strategic crossings pay for themselves quickly—an I-64 pilot saved \$2 million per site in under two years.

Puts Virginia's Plan into Action

The Wildlife Corridor Action Plan identifies 26 high-risk Nexus Areas. The WCGF turns planning into real, on-the-ground solutions.

Sustains Wildlife & Outdoor Traditions

Crossings keep wildlife populations healthy and connected, supporting hunting, fishing, birdwatching, and Virginia's outdoor economy.

Leverages Federal Funding—No Budget Impact

Over 20 federal grants are available for wildlife crossings. Voluntary DMV and tax contributions unlock these funds without using general fund dollars.

Builds Flood Resilience

Upgraded crossings and culverts improve water flow, aquatic connectivity, and community resilience to flooding.

This position was taken by Virginia Conservation Network (VCN)'s Legislative Committee and Board of Directors and is supported by Virginia's conservation community. For a complete list of VCN positions, visit www.vcnva.org/bill-tracker. VCN is committed to building a powerful, diverse, and highly-coordinated conservation movement focused on protecting our Commonwealth's natural resources today and for tomorrow.



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