



**BACKCOUNTRY
HUNTERS & ANGLERS**
CALIFORNIA

August 16, 2024

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: FHWA WCPP Grant Application for the Mammoth Lakes US 395 Wildlife Crossing Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

The California Chapter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers strongly supports Mono County Community Development Department (CDD) and Caltrans District 9's application for funding through the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP). This funding is critical for the design phase of the Mammoth Lakes US 395 Wildlife Crossing project, which seeks to reduce Wildlife Vehicle Collisions (WVCs) on US Route 395 and State Route 203 in Mono County, California.

US Route 395 and State Route 203 bisect important habitat for mule deer migration and other wildlife, causing a high rate of wildlife-vehicle collisions and impacting public safety. The direct mortality and impacts to wildlife movement in the project area have elevated this corridor as a priority barrier to address in both SO 3362 California's Wildlife Action Plan and California Department of Fish & Wildlife's Priority Barriers Report. To enhance permeability and public safety, we support the project's proposal to advance two overpasses, one underpass, bridge enhancements, exclusion fencing, a wildlife detection system, and jump outs, and will greatly enhance habitat connectivity and public safety.

Project Support and Commitment

Mono County, with Caltrans District 9, requests \$8 million of the \$10 million needed for design and permitting. The project has strong backing, including a completed Feasibility Study and the formation of the Eastern Sierra Wildlife Stewardship Team. Funding from the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) has already been secured for environmental compliance.

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers is committed to supporting this initiative by working to conserve priority landscapes and mule deer habitat in this region to safeguard this infrastructure investment. We are also working to increase public support for wildlife crossings in addition to support for state and federal legislation to fund and implement more wildlife crossing infrastructure in California and across the nation.



WWW.BACKCOUNTRYHUNTERS.ORG/CALIFORNIA_BHA
CALIFORNIA@BACKCOUNTRYHUNTERS.ORG

Alignment with WCPP Goals

This project aligns with FHWA’s Wildlife Crossing Pilot Program (WCPP) by reducing WVCs and enhancing habitat connectivity, serving as a model for innovative safety and environmental solutions.

We respectfully request FHWA’s favorable consideration of this funding request to ensure the success of this important project for the Eastern Sierra's natural heritage and public safety.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Eric Hanson
California Chapter Chair
Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

