



WESTERN
GOVERNORS'
ASSOCIATION

Brian Schweitzer
Governor of Montana
Chairman

C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor of Idaho
Vice Chairman

Pam O. Inmann
Executive Director

Headquarters:

1600 Broadway
Suite 1700
Denver, CO 80202

303-623-9378
Fax 303-534-7309

Washington, D.C. Office:
400 N. Capitol Street, N.W.
Suite 388
Washington, D.C. 20001

202-624-5402
Fax 202-624-7707

www.westgov.org

July 7, 2010

The Honorable Ray LaHood
Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary LaHood:

On behalf of the Western Governors' Wildlife Council (the Council) we wish to express our appreciation for the inclusion of "improved habitat connectivity" in the list of environmental sustainable criteria for the recently posted Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER II) discretionary funds through the 2010 Appropriations Act.

Western Governors named their wildlife experts to the Council to identify key wildlife corridors and crucial wildlife habitats in the West and coordinate implementation of needed policy options and tools to aid in conserving those landscapes.

We are writing today to communicate the importance of transportation projects that maintain, improve and restore connectivity for wildlife while at the same time providing improved highway safety by significantly reducing wildlife-vehicle collisions. The construction of wildlife crossings, or overpasses and underpasses, are an excellent example of innovative and environmentally sustainable transportation projects that Departments of Transportation are embarking on across the West. Wildlife crossing construction also encourages diverse partnerships between state wildlife agencies, DOTs, local government and non-governmental organizations.

Not only can these funds make highways safer for the public and for wildlife but they also boost the economy in Western states through job creation. Finally, TIGER funds are an important federal resource that can be used to leverage state dollars.

Thank you for the leadership and innovative approaches being advanced by the U.S. Department of Transportation on the use of these funds. We look forward to demonstrating how useful these funds will be.

Sincerely,

John Harja
State of Utah
WGWC Chairman

Joe Maurier
State of Montana
WGWC Vice Chairman

cc: WGWC members
Western State DOT Directors