



July 29, 2016

Idaho Transportation Department
ITIP Comments, Attention Adam Rush
Office of Communications
P.O. Box 7129 Boise, ID 83707-1129

Re: Comments on Idaho Transportation Department 2017-2021 Idaho Transportation Investment Program

Dear Idaho Transportation Department:

The Henry's Fork Legacy Project (HFLP) is pleased to submit the following comments on the Draft Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) Idaho Transportation Investment Program (ITIP), which addresses Idaho's transportation needs for fiscal years 2017 through 2021.

HFLP is a collaboration of local organizations and agencies dedicated to conserving the rural landscapes and unique natural resources of the Upper Henry's Fork. Our Island Park Safe Wildlife Passage Initiative envisions safer travel for people and wildlife through Island Park that sustains our economic, ecological, and cultural heritage as visitation increases to the Yellowstone region.

These comments specifically focus on proposed Project 14054 in District 6 which is planned to "reconstruct four miles of US-20 as well as a potential truck climbing lane between milepost 401.5 and milepost 406.3 near Island Park in Fremont County."¹ We respectfully request that ITD include wildlife mitigation in the planning, budgeting and engineering process for this project.

HFLP members were invited to a meeting with ITD to review a draft of Dr. Patricia C. Cramer's forthcoming report, "Idaho Wildlife Connectivity and Safety Solutions on US 20 and SH 87," which identifies the stretch of US-20 from mileposts 402 to 406 as one of the largest hotspots on US-20 with regards to wildlife-vehicle collisions per mile per year.

This four-mile stretch of US-20 is an area of known ecological importance for grizzlies and wolverines. Due to the vulnerability of these species, collisions with wolverines and grizzly bears can have a profound impact to the species at the population level. With close proximity to

¹ http://itd.idaho.gov/itip/itip2017/FY17_Draft_itip.pdf

Yellowstone National Park, this stretch of US-20 is also an important linkage area for migrating elk and moose populations, as well as mule deer, pronghorn, and black bears.

Project 14054 at Targhee Pass represents a critical opportunity to build wildlife mitigation into the project design from the outset at a less expensive cost, while construction is already planned to occur. By building wildlife mitigation into this project in a known wildlife vehicle collision hotspot area, we can make Idaho's roads safer for the motoring public as well as wildlife.

We ask that ITD act on the recommendations made in the forthcoming Cramer report and include wildlife mitigation in the planning and engineering process for this project. We also ask that ITD amend the ITIP for Project 14054 to include project funds to cover the cost associated with implementing mitigation solutions.

Respectfully submitted,

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