

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FEDERAL FUNDING FOR WILDLIFE CROSSINGS IN JEOPARDY

TALLAHASSEE, FL – JULY 21, 2003. The House Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury and Independent Agencies last Friday eliminated all funding for Transportation Enhancements in FY 2004, including all funding for wildlife crossings under the program. Transportation Enhancement funds are currently available to state and local governments to design and construct wildlife crossings and other structures to help protect wildlife and motorists on U.S. highways by reducing or eliminating vehicle-wildlife collisions. Over 1 million animals are killed by vehicles each day in the U.S., according to the Humane Society. Each year, over 10,000 Americans are injured as a result of vehicle collisions with wildlife, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Loss of Transportation Enhancement funds would eliminate anticipated funding of wildlife crossing projects such as the Lake Jackson Ecopassage, a project being proposed for a small stretch of highway at Lake Jackson near Tallahassee, Florida. The site has the highest number of attempted road crossings by turtles ever documented in the world with over 8,600 turtles crossing in just 33 months. Because the specific language of the bill has not been set, there is still a chance to restore full funding for wildlife crossings when the Appropriations Committee marks up the bill for legislation this week. Concerned citizens should immediately contact the Lake Jackson Ecopassage Alliance at www.lakejacksonturtles.org to find out how they can help contact congressional leaders to ensure wildlife crossings continue to be funded.

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