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YELLOWSTONE TO YUKON

CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

September 10, 2009

Timothy L. Stark, P.E.
Environmental Services Engineer
WYDOT
5300 Bishop Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY. 82009-3340

Dear Mr. Stark,

Re: Support for Underpasses for Wildlife on south western Wyoming Highways

The Yellowstone to Yukon Conservation Initiative (Y2Y) is pleased to write this letter in support of Wyoming Department of Transportation's application for federal stimulus funding to construct wildlife underpasses on highways in south western Wyoming.

Y2Y is an international effort involving over one hundred partners who are implementing conservation actions to create a network of interconnected landscapes stretching from the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem to the Arctic Circle. Federal, state and provincial government agencies, Native Americans and First Nations, land conservancies, scientists, progressive businesses, communities and traditional conservation organizations are all contributing to the patchwork of lands that will keep wildlife populations connected to each other and enable migration in response to changing climates.

One of the wondrous phenomena that characterize the Yellowstone to Yukon region is the long-distance migration of large herds of ungulates, such as antelope, elk, caribou and deer. One such migration is that of the 14,000-animal mule deer herd that ranges from the southern extent of the Y2Y region just south of Yellowstone National Park to south and western Wyoming. The network of underpasses proposed by the Wyoming Department of Transportation will ensure that these and other natural animal movements will continue in safety to both animals and the travelling public.

The experience in Banff National Park, close to Y2Y's headquarters in Alberta, is that the combination of fencing and underpasses is an extremely effective tool in reducing vehicle wildlife collisions and preserving the ability of animals to move across busy highways. This ability of the landscape to enable continued wildlife migration will become only increasingly important in an era of climate change,

where animals will be seeking to shift their ranges to more northerly latitudes or higher elevations.

Y2Y wholeheartedly supports the use of federal stimulus funding for such purposes and in particular for the projects proposed by Wyoming DOT.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Wendy Francis

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Conservation Science and Action
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