

CHAPTER 77

AN ACT concerning the movement of wildlife throughout the State and supplementing Title 23 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

C.23:2A-7.1 "Wildlife Corridor Action Plan," definitions.

1. a. As used in this section:

"Action plan" means the "Wildlife Corridor Action Plan" developed pursuant to subsection b. of this section.

"Crossing project" means a project within a wildlife corridor that incorporates additional measures into a transportation project, which measures promote motor vehicle driver safety and wildlife habitat connectivity and are conducive to wildlife quality of life and safety.

"Transportation project" means a project involving roadways, bridges, or culverts that has been included in the State's Annual Transportation Capital Program. "Transportation project" shall not include maintenance or repair projects.

"Wildlife corridor" means a swath of land proximate to wildlife populations along which wildlife may move freely without significant risk of injury or death from motor vehicles or undue interference due to other man-made barriers.

b. No later than 36 months after the effective date of this act, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Transportation shall jointly develop a "Wildlife Corridor Action Plan," based on the requirements outlined in subsection c. of this section, which shall be updated at least every 10 years. No later than 60 days after the completion of the development of the plan, and any update or revision thereto, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Transportation shall prepare and submit to the Governor, and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature, a summary of the "Wildlife Corridor Action Plan."

c. The "Wildlife Corridor Action Plan" shall:

(1) identify wildlife corridors, wildlife-vehicle collision hotspots, and existing or planned barriers to wildlife movement along these corridors;

(2) identify and recommend criteria for crossing projects to promote motor vehicle driver safety and wildlife connectivity with natural and wildlife areas conducive to quality of life and safety for wildlife;

(3) use relevant State databases and complement and incorporate existing conservation strategies developed in the State, including, but not limited to, any State wildlife action plans and the Department of Environmental Protection's "Connecting Habitat Across New Jersey" project (NJ CHANJ);

(4) consider the impact of transportation projects on wildlife corridors and recommend strategies to mitigate threats to wildlife and wildlife corridors by modifying and incorporating safety measures into transportation projects; and

(5) coordinate action between the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Transportation, other State agencies and independent authorities, federal agencies, and national and State conservation, environment, and wildlife groups and organizations to maximize the effectiveness and safety of wildlife corridors.

d. No later than 36 months after the "Wildlife Corridor Action Plan" is submitted to the Governor and the Legislature, pursuant to subsection b. of this section, the Department of Transportation shall review the plan and identify and recommend crossing projects that, to the extent feasible, may be incorporated into a transportation project. The Department of Transportation shall not identify and recommend crossing projects for inclusion in any

transportation project that has surpassed the concept development phase, the selection of a preferred alternative, or an equivalent milestone since the enactment of P.L.2025, c.77 (C.23:2A-7.1).

e. While developing the action plan pursuant to subsection b. of this section, the Department of Environmental Protection and the Department of Transportation may call upon the advice and services of other State agencies and independent authorities, federal agencies, and national and State conservation, environment, or wildlife groups and organizations. While reviewing the plan pursuant to subsection d. of this section, the Department of Transportation may call upon the advice and services of other State agencies and independent authorities, federal agencies, and national and State conservation, environment, or wildlife groups and organizations.

2. The Department of Environmental Protection may adopt, pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,” P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of P.L.2025, c.77 (C.23:2A-7.1).

3. The Department of Transportation may adopt, pursuant to the "Administrative Procedure Act," P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of P.L.2025, c.77 (C.23:2A-7.1).

4. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved June 30, 2025.