

## ***“Testimony in Support of HB 2027”***

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I write today to encourage the passing of HB 2027. The intent of the Wild and Scenic Act is to build **partnerships** among landowners, river users, tribal nations and all levels of government in developing goals for **river protections**. Designation provides **strong protection** against **construction of new dams or projects** that alter free-flowing condition, water quality and ORV's for which the river was designated. This national policy is a declaration to **preserve certain rivers and their immediate environments**, maintain free-flowing condition, **protect water quality** and fulfill other vital national conservation purposes.

Bend Park and Rec's attempt to strong-arm the building of a bridge across the Deschutes River within the Wild and Scenic boundaries is typical of this district's over-stepping and disregard for laws. This stretch of river is home to numerous wildlife and fish that are already struggling to survive with the water level mismanagement by the Army Corps of Engineers. The last thing this fragile environment or wildlife needs is the destruction of habitat that will no doubt come with bridge construction. One only needs to look at the recent Colorado Bridge/whitewater park debacle where Bend Park and Rec decimated the riverbank and riparian zone. They prioritized amusement park like amenities and have shown total disregard for the environment.

The Wild and Scenic Act serves to protect the environment while eliminating adverse impacts. The adverse impacts that the construction of a bridge would bring, coupled with the impairment of scenery, and consequences of trash and dog waste would threaten the water quality as well as lead to erosion of the riparian zone as people commonly walk off trail and under and beside bridges. Wildlife will be threatened and will undeniably have to relocate to survive.

In the Bend Park and Rec tent at Drake Park four years ago, Steve Jorgensen, Planning Manager, told my husband, Tim and me, that he “has no problem condemning private land in order to build a bridge over the Deschutes. The district

has done it before and will do it again.” In Oregon, condemnation is typically a last resort and used when land is clearly needed to protect resource values. Bend Park and Rec has no desire to protect any resource, and while they should be working in tangent with the state and federal government to ensure the protection of river values and respecting the rights of homeowners, they instead use threats and promise condemnation.

The bridge that Bend Park and Rec is proposing over the Deschutes will harm the natural beauty of a scenic waterway. It will damage the riparian zone and threaten the viability of wildlife that have made this area their home. It will harm the water quality with trash and dog waste. Please vote yes on HB 2027 to protect this area from irreparable harm.

Sincerely,  
Kristen Phillips