

From: Alan Bickett
To: [SENR Exhibits](#)
Subject: HB 2027 - Deschutes River Pedestrian Bridge
Date: Sunday, May 07, 2017 1:48:31 PM

Dear Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources,

I strongly urge you to vote No on HB 2027, which would prevent building of a pedestrian bridge across the Deschutes River near the southern urban growth boundary.

My wife and I live in the River Rim subdivision of Bend. The availability of access to the Deschutes River trail is a major benefit of living in this area. We walk on the trail several times per week, however, there is no easy walking access from the heavily developed area on the east side of the river where we live to the forested lands on the west side of the river. Instead, we must drive eight miles through the busy Old Mill area to get directly across the river.

For decades the Bend Parks and Recreation District has been planning a pedestrian bridge near the southern urban growth boundary to connect the area just outside the city limits on the east side of the river with trails on the west side of the river. Ultimately this connection will allow a continuous trail from Tumalo State Park to Sunriver. Voters approved funds for this purpose in 2012. This expansion of recreational opportunity is much needed as Bend grows. It is opportunities such as this that attracts visitors and new residents to Bend and maintains a high quality of outdoor life.

One reason given to oppose the bridge is that it would cause damage to the river ecosystem. I believe this is a red herring rather than a legitimate concern. My wife and I strongly support environmental causes and are members of Greenpeace and the Oregon Natural Desert Association, among others. If we thought that addition of the proposed bridge would damage the natural environment we would not support it. However, we routinely see a wide range of wildlife on the river including ducks, geese, swans, osprey, swallows and bald eagles along populated sections of the trail which have more heavy usage than the new extension would likely have. Any claims of potential environmental impact that are not based on a valid scientific study should be viewed very skeptically.

Thank you for considering my input.

Sincerely,

Alan Bickett
Bend, Oregon