

From: OR-7
To: [SENR Exhibits](#)
Subject: Testimony in opposition to HB 2027
Date: Monday, May 08, 2017 8:30:47 AM

I write in opposition to HB 2027, a special interest bill intended to thwart the needs of the people of Bend by preempting their right to consider the possibility of a pedestrian bridge over the Deschutes River as part of area recreational trails.

This bill was introduced by Rep. Gene Whisnant through a “gut and stuff” maneuver at the behest of a few adjacent landowners without ANY opportunity for wider consideration by the people of Deschutes County. Rep. Whisnant did not even have the decency to consult with either the Deschutes County Commission or the Bend Metro Parks and Recreation Department, both of which represent all local people rather than a few cronies.

As to the merits of the bill, it is extremely short-sighted to prevent the construction of this pedestrian only bridge across the Deschutes River. Yes, this is a natural area. But the type of bridge envisioned will have no impact on the river, its animals, or its fish. What this bridge will do is to reduce automobile traffic along the Cascades Lake Highway leading west out of Bend to the recreational areas used by thousands of local residents. It will allow Deschutes County residents to walk or bike to trails and other recreational areas from the east side of the river without driving through a heavily congested area.

In the environmental balance, a pedestrian bridge across the upper Deschutes River will cause far less damage than additional vehicular traffic in Oregon’s fastest growing county. It is regrettable that a few residents near one of the proposed bridge sites was able to bully a local Representative into introducing such a poorly thought out bill.

I urge the Senate to reject HB 2027 and allow the local governmental bodies in Bend and Deschutes County to resolve this issue on their own. If the Senate wishes to address failings of the current law they should concentrate on amending the laws to remove the one-year loophole on all activities governed by the current law.

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