

**From:** Scott Reich  
**To:** [SENR Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** HB 2017 Opposition  
**Date:** Monday, May 08, 2017 12:16:06 PM

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***These comments are regarding House Bill 2027, to be considered on 5/10/2017 by the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources.***

Chairman Dembrow and Members of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources:

I am contacting you in regard to consideration of House Bill 2027 for which the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources will be holding a public hearing on Wednesday. This bill would prohibit the consideration of a pedestrian and bike bridge across the Deschutes River in Bend. I will not be able to attend the meeting but would like to share my thoughts on the bill.

I am strongly opposed to HB 2027 as it is misleading in nature and would circumvent an open, transparent and inclusive review process that is already underway by the State of Oregon Parks and Recreation Department. To be clear, the primary points that I urge you to consider in regard to HB 2027 are:

- Voting down this bill will not mean that a pedestrian and bike bridge will necessarily be built across the Deschutes River in Bend. Instead, rejection of this legislation would allow a healthy and productive review process to continue. This review process is administered by the State of Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, is supported by an impartial mediator, and is inclusive of all members of the public who choose to weigh in. A description of the review process can be viewed here: <http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/Pages/upper-deschutes-scenic-waterway.aspx>
- It is important to acknowledge that the Oregon Scenic Waterways program is not a wilderness designation with prohibitions of any human impact; far from it. According to Congressional record, the river segment in question was included as a Scenic Waterway because “outstanding scenic, recreational, cultural, geologic, wilderness, fish and wildlife as well as historic and botanical values exist in the area.” As is clear by this description, a balanced approach of values should be considered in regard to this proposed pedestrian and bike bridge. [citation from July 1996 Upper Deschutes Wild and Scenic River and State Scenic Waterway Comprehensive Management Plan, page 24]
- Environmental and neighborhood impact are a major part of the State of Oregon review process and will be considered in a balanced and transparent manner. Additionally, the Bend Park and Recreation District has a long track record of strong environmental consideration with projects along the Deschutes River.
- The supposed conservation organization that supports this legislation is simply a loose affiliation of a dozen or so homeowners who oppose the bridge. The Upper Deschutes Conservation Council (not to be confused with the Upper Deschutes Watershed Council) is not a registered non-profit and did not exist until late last year as debate on this issue increased. Their entire existence and the influence they aim to have on this issue is based in deception, manipulation, deep pockets and political connections. Allowing them to have an out-sized influence on this public issue is not in the best

interest of your constituents or Oregon residents as a whole. If legitimate conservation organizations choose to oppose the bridge, they may do so through the existing review process.

Many residents of local neighborhoods, Deschutes County and the State of Oregon hold views in support of and opposed to this bridge. To date, we have all been served well by a healthy and fair review process. Please don't allow a loud few to circumvent this process with the passage of deceptive and unnecessary legislation.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.

Best regards,

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