

From: Jody Littlehales
To: Sen.MichaelDembrow@state.or.us; [SENR Exhibits](#); [Sen Knopp](#); rep.knutebuehler@state.or.us
Subject: Please Oppose HB 2027
Date: Monday, May 08, 2017 8:24:10 PM

Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

I urge the Committee and Senate to stop HB2027, and stand up for an open planning process and the public good!

The main reason to vote against HB2027 is the bill undermines a long and public planning process, to shape policy based on the will of a few private entities. Our elected representatives should not be making public policy in secret, and if they have objections to a public plan they should be honest and raise them in the open! HB2027 represents the kind of underhanded legislative maneuver that increases public cynicism about politics, and unwillingness to participate in future planning process if legislators are going to undermine or undo public decisions in secret.

Bend Parks & Rec District has been working for many years on a plan to connect the Deschutes River Trail and create a continuous path from Bend to Sunriver. One important element of this plan is the development of a complete river trail system to allow residents bicycle and pedestrian access while being environmentally sensitive to the Deschutes River. If you look at the documents online <http://www.bendparksandrec.org/south-canyon/> this has been a long public planning process, with many public meetings and documented community input. The final option selected came after many meetings, public comment and based on criteria that provides the greatest public good at the least private impact. It is hard for me to understand what the objection to the proposal, but if there are objections I would like to hear them raised and discussed in a public forum.

Over the past several years, significant steps have been made to complete the vision of a fully-connected trail system with completion of missing trail segments, construction of two new bike/pedestrian bridges and reconstruction of two existing bridges. The trail system now only lacks a few elements that would provide a continuous trail system from the Sunriver area through Bend and onto Tumalo Park. All of these improvements have been constructed in an environmentally responsible manner to eliminate or lesson possible trail impacts. Completion of this trail system would be a great asset to the community that would provide a continuous 20+ mile trail network north and south of (and through) Bend for both local residents and visitors to Central Oregon. A strong majority of residents of Central Oregon recognize the significant amenity a fully-connected trail system will be, and support its continued development.

We should continue the public discussion of the benefits of the plan as well as any concerns about the potential impacts of the project. However, this debate should be done in an open manner allowing public discussion of the cost/benefits of the plan. To allow a single legislator to undermine a multi-year planning process to appease private interests is a disservice to all residents of Central Oregon, and the public in general. I hope the Environmental and Natural Resource Committee will oppose HB 2027, and allow the South UGB planning process and community discussion to continue on how to improve public access and transportation options in Deschutes County.

Sincerely,

Jodi

Jodi Littlehales
Bend, OR