

**From:** Timothy Lester  
**To:** [SENR Exhibits](#)  
**Cc:** [Sen Knopp](#)  
**Subject:** House Bill 2027 - Senate House Committee Review  
**Date:** Wednesday, May 10, 2017 7:48:32 AM

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To Members of the Senate House Committee Reviewing House Bill 2027 on 10 May 2017:

Dear Committee Members:

I support the construction of a pedestrian bridge across the Deschutes River as proposed by the [Bend Parks and Recreation plan](#). State law rules and regulations under review were intended to protect our local scenery and natural environment as well as enhance the enjoyment of it by our residents and visitors. Bend has grown. Legislation passed 30 years ago related to the prohibition of a pedestrian bridge across the Deschutes River at the expanded Bend UGB requires review and revision.

Population has grown to the southern UGB. Population on the east southern side of the city is planned to grow more as a result of [recent UGB expansion](#). Access to the Deschutes National Forest provided by this bridge would be a substantial public benefit. Both sides of the river in the UGB at the point of crossing are developed with residential structures. The pedestrian bridge gives reasonable walking and biking distance access to more than hundreds of residents on the east side of the Deschutes River via extensive existing trails on the east side of the river for recreational access to the Deschutes National Forest trails on the west side of the river. It gives thousands more access without the necessity of crossing a vehicle bridge at a distance to the north down river in the city of Bend that increases traffic in a congested area.

I urge you to examine editorials in the Bend Bulletin related to the proposed bridge crossing. <http://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/5281118-151/erik-lukens-column-a-bridge-a-bill-and>  
<http://www.bendbulletin.com/opinion/5278448-151/editorial-rep-whisnant-fails-on-bridge-bill>  
<http://www.bendbulletin.com/newsroomstafflist/5263477-151/erik-lukens-column-gene-whisnants-give-away-to-riverfront>

[Bachelor View Road](#) is an affluent large acreage lot development in the city of Bend on the west side of the Deschutes River with influential residents in the immediate vicinity of the proposed bridge crossing. Thirteen residents on this road having a combined total of \$26,311,480.00 assessed real market property value made public submissions opposing the proposed bridge for perceived impacts on their property and environment.

Public record submissions: <https://olis.leg.state.or.us/liz/2017R1/Committees/HAGNR/2017-04-13-08-00/HB2027/Details> and <http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/docs/deschutes-sww-con-final-20151120.pdf>

I believe that a change in state law to allow for the construction of a pedestrian bridge does not obviate subsequent requirements for a non-politicized impact review of a proposed pedestrian bridge construction required by other rules and regulations that would consider all comments that contend with positive general public interest and support for the construction of the bridge.

I support necessary environmental protections of our scenic Deschutes River waterway balanced with the opening of opportunities to Bend citizens and visitors to enjoy them with access through established public city paths and trails.

I suggest that law related the specific Deschutes River designated area segment covering the proposed pedestrian bridge crossing be amended or structured to specify the purpose of any bridge to be constructed across the river. That purpose being only a prohibition of any motor vehicle traffic bridge crossing and either by default or specific design allowing a pedestrian bridge. Obviously a motor vehicle traffic bridge is an entirely different matter of scenic and environmental impact.

The proposed pedestrian bridge in an area of residential development on this scenic waterway facilitates the opportunities of the public to enjoy its scenic wonder as beheld from existing Deschutes National Forest trails on the west side of the Deschutes River.

Please open the door to addressing and complying with subsequent scenic and environmental impacts as required by various agency rules and regulations. Revision or removal of state law provisions prohibiting a pedestrian bridge crossing as proposed by Bend Parks and Recreation opens that door to allow proceeding with subsequent evaluation and rulings on impacts and protections.

State law passed 30 years ago containing prohibitions on bridge crossings at this specific designated scenic and wild portion of the Deschutes River should not be a blockage to reasonable construction of a pedestrian bridge in an urban environment that provides public access to enjoy the beauty of Deschutes National Forest public lands that is on our very doorstep today.

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