

May 29, 2017

Senator Peter Courtney, President
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE, S-201
Salem, OR 97301

Via email – Sen.PeterCourtney@OregonLegislature.gov

Re: HB 2027A-Engrossed – A Bill for An Act Relating to Water

Honorable Senator Courtney,

I have serious concerns regarding the future of our State Scenic Waterway designation for the Deschutes River south of Bend.

I would like to add my support regarding the need to expedite the Senate approval of HB 2027A-Engrossed which reiterates the intent of Oregon's Scenic Waterway legislation and administrative rules to maintain the quality of scenic resources, fish and wildlife, scientific and recreational features based on the special attributes of the area.

The prohibition of any bridge development by a "public body" or a "local service district" identified in HB 2027A Section 1 (2) clarifies and reiterates the need for future and continued protection of this important segment of the Deschutes River Scenic Waterway. This segment "includes segments of the Deschutes River from ... Harper Bridge downstream to the Central Oregon Irrigation District's diversion structure (near river mile 171)," constituted on October 4, 1977 by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Robert Straub.

Preservation, planning and enhancement are paramount to Oregon's legacy which lies in its natural beauty and its irreplaceable resources. The section of river located at the Bend Urban Growth Boundary southern edge as well as the remaining portion of this segment is unique and remains a relatively intact historic remnant of a Ponderosa pine riverine environment.

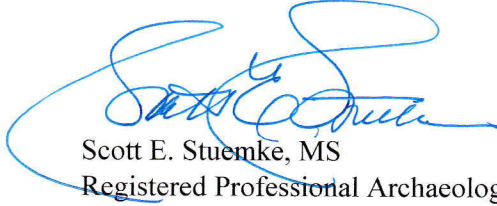
As a caveat, I worked for the Deschutes National Forest – Bend Ranger District as an archaeologist, tasked with a survey for prehistoric and historical archeological resources along the Deschutes River from the Bend district lands upstream of Bend's urban growth boundary to Wickiup Dam along the Deschutes River for federal Wild and Scenic River designation. Considerable prehistoric and historic evidence were observed and documented. This inventory information is exempt from public disclosure yet is a valuable part of the environmental planning process. I recently reviewed the Oregon State Historic Preservation Geographic Information System Database to review and assess the current updated information on this section of the Deschutes River. These resources are important to the Nation's and Native American cultural patrimony.

The legislature's acknowledgment of resource values and importance is exemplified by unanimous approval by the Oregon House and the Senate's public hearing on this bill. This important piece of legislation needs to be heard, considered and voted on especially with the 2016-2017 session's legislative deadline looming this coming Friday June 2 and scheduled in adjournment July.

I urge the need to consider this important piece of legislation for environmental and property right protection proposed by Representative Whisnant and his colleagues during this legislative session.

Thank you for your consideration on this important matter. Tomorrow may be too late.

Sincerely yours,



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