

REPRESENTATIVES AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I am a resident of Bend, and a member of the Deschutes County Bike Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC), which has caused me to pay particular attention to transportation issues in Central Oregon.

I am writing this testimony in **OPPOSITION TO HOUSE BILL 4029**. The following comments are my own, NOT on behalf of the BPAC.

I have followed for years now Bend Parks and Recreation (BPRD) as it has planned for a fully-connected trail system extending from Tumalo to Sunriver. That is a centerpiece of a 20-year vision supported by voters in the form of a bond measure, and supported in numerous opinion polls conducted by BPRD.

I want to present 3 points in opposing HB 4029:

1 – BPRD has run a long and very transparent public process planning the Deschutes River Trail System:

- There have been a number of public input opportunities
- The connected trail vision has been developed over 20 years
- Connected trails have been part of the city, county and BPRD transportation plans for many years
- When complete, residents and visitors will be able to use the trail from either end without driving – relieving some crowding on roads and promoting active recreation
- The open public process is set to continue in connection with trail planning

2 – The connected trail vision is significantly favored by residents throughout the Deschutes County

- This has been shown in BPRD surveys and comments
- Most importantly – it was supported & funded by vote when the 2012 bond measure was approved to pay for the bridge and other trail enhancements

3 – This specific area has already developed substantially, and is developing further regardless of the bridge decision or the river's wild or scenic designation:

- This stretch of river is now within and adjacent to the UGB of Bend, and just as elsewhere in the Bend area, the river remains scenic but is no longer wild/remote as suggested by the protected designation.

- One side of the river has a number of multi-unit developments, a new 78-unit development is proposed in exactly this area, and more developments are in the works – literally thousands of residents live within an easy walk
- The other side of the river is also developed, although not as densely, and the currently-proposed end of the bridge is in a Forest Service off-leash dog park (“Good Dog Park”)
- Although this is only a footbridge, there are legitimate environmental questions – which are required to be addressed through the multiple levels of review as the planning and permitting process for the bridge continues

I urge the Committee to let this bill die because:

- It represents an attempt to prematurely end legitimate local public input
- It favors the interests of a handful of residents nearby at the expense of the many, many others
- It prevents logical connectivity of trail systems, adding pressure to roads and air quality
- The bill countermands a vote of the people that favors completion of the trail & the bridge and agreed to pay for it in the 2012 bonding measure.
- Finally, absent this bill, there still will be an appropriate continuing environmental review specifically focused on this proposal before any bridge construction could be approved.

In summary, the “wild and scenic” nature of the river has already been changed by the UGB expansion and local development. HB4029 represents:

- (1) bad transportation policy (un-connected systems);
- (2) bad public policy, negating the vote and funding of the residents; and
- (3) a transparent and counter-productive attempt to short-circuit appropriate LOCAL continuing evaluation (environmental and otherwise) of this bridge proposal.

Christopher Cassard

Resident of Bend

Submitted February 2, 2018