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From: OR-7 <OR-7@bendbroadband.com>
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Subject: HB 4029

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House Committee on Agriculture and National Resources
Representative Brian Clem, Chair
900 Court Street, NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Chair Clem, Vice-Chairs McLain and Sprenger and members of the Committee:

I am writing in opposition to HB 4029, which would ban bridges crossing the Deschutes River from the Central Oregon Irrigation District intake to a location upriver of Sunriver. I believe that this bill is deeply flawed for several reasons:

- 1) Though masquerading as a step towards environmental protection, banning a pedestrian/bicycle Deschutes river crossing is in fact a step towards further environmental degradation. Like it or not (and I don't), the Bend area is growing rapidly. Most of this growth is on the east side of the Dechutes river. To get to recreational areas on the west side of the river these residents of Bend must now drive their cars to recreational parking areas on the west side of the river. This creates air pollution, road traffic, noise, and other impacts which could be avoided if these residents had easy and convenient ways to cross the river south of Bend's Healy Bridge. We are not talking about an automotive bridge here; nobody wants that. Rather we are talking about a pedestrian and bicycle crossing which would reduce a 10 to 15 mile trip on busy roads to just a couple of miles on trails.
- 2) No decision has yet been made about what kind of bridge should be built, where it should be built, or even if it should be built at all. But HB 4029 removes that decision from those most affected by it, namely the greater Bend community and Deschutes County residents. This is truly an example of a case where local residents as a whole ought to have the ability to plan their own future rather than being blocked for a few special interests. Yes, there are cases where local decision making isn't all that matters (like the creation of the Three Sisters Wilderness area), but this is not one of those cases where the whole state and the natural world will lose bigtime if local decision making prevails.
- 3) HP 4029 is in conflict with decades-old planning by city and county governments. It's a monkey wrench thrown by a few private property owners with little regard for their neighbors and a shortsighted view of what will happen to the larger environment as a consequence of preserving their private preserve. It's NIMBYism at its worst.

Please kill this bad idea now.

John Cushing
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