

February 5 , 2018

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:

We are homeowners on Buck Canyon Road in Bend OR. Our neighborhood is in the location of the proposed walking bridge across the Deschutes River. The Parks and Recreation Department indicates that the completion and connectivity goal of this bridge is referenced in several public planning documents dating back to the 1980s, including in the Bend Park and Recreation District's Trails Master Plan, the City of Bend's Transportation System Plan, and the Deschutes River Trail Action Plan. Yet for decades we have continued hearing about the bridge being built, but we see that other projects have taken priority.

The trail route that would cross the bridge uses the existing public trails in Elk Meadow at RiverRim and then transitions to private property before connecting to the proposed bridge. The private property owner did sign a letter of intent in 2017 for this trail alignment.

In a spring 2017 survey, when asked what the District could do to improve parks and trails, 72% of respondents were supportive of completing a footbridge crossing on the south boundary of Bend. 14% were unsupportive. This location was finally approved by the District's Board of Directors on May 2, 2017.

The 2017 Oregon Legislature considered House Bill 2027-A-4 which would prohibit the bridge being built. The bill did not advance in the Legislative session and was not approved because there was so much support from the people of Bend for the construction of the new bridge.

The current measure House Bill 4029 calls for a ban on a bridge crossing the Deschutes River at the current designated location. Unfortunately this is the desire of a small percentage of residents on the West side of the river. They seek to prevent the majority of users on the East side from accessing Federal Land for recreation. We count on you to see through this scheme presented by the West side minority and vote NO on Bill 4029.

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