

Comments on HB 4029

To: Members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

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In general, I support the passage of HB 4029, which will add needed protection to the Deschutes River Scenic Waterway. A few comments and suggested changes are outlined below.

Protect the Deschutes River Scenic Waterway

Existing state law is not strong enough to adequately protect the Deschutes River Scenic Waterway Recreation Area. These stretches of the river have been designated as a scenic waterway for more than 30 years. Construction of a recreational trail and pedestrian/bicycle bridge as currently proposed by the Bend Park and Recreation District (BPRD) would cause significant damage to this environmentally sensitive area through construction activities and the resulting intrusion of hikers, bikers and their dogs.

Identify Alternate Routes

We must find an alternative to BPRD's proposed route for a recreational trail connecting Bend and Sunriver, which involves construction of a bridge in a protected section of the Deschutes River Scenic Waterway Recreation Area. The proposal also includes construction of an access trail and parking lot in another environmentally sensitive area known as Buck Canyon, which is a significant wildlife habitat and migration corridor.

The criteria listed in HB 4029 are appropriate. We need to find a route for the trail and bridge that would not adversely impact our scenic waterways, wildlife habitats or migration corridors, and would utilize existing or planned trail segments *to the extent possible*.

It might be a good idea to add the words *to the extent possible* to Section 2 (3) to provide flexibility.

Make It An Open Process

The study of potential routes should be an open process. The initial language of Section 2 should be revised to require the State Parks and Recreation Department to study potential routes *in consultation with all affected parties* including the City of Bend and Deschutes County, as well as local residents and the public at large.