

February 6, 2018

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

Chair Clem, Vice-Chairs McClain and Springer and members of the Committee:

Testimony in Opposition to HB 4029: My name is Rick Root. I am a citizen of Bend (have lived here for nearly 25-years), an avid hiker and biker, and a giant supporter of protecting Central Oregon's bountiful natural resources for future generations. Also, as a retired transportation planner from the city of Bend, I am very familiar with the City and Park District – Deschutes River Trail Plans and the local supporting policy.

I OPPOSE passage of proposed **HB-4029** that would specifically prohibit the construction of a new non-automobile bridge that is proposed across the Deschutes River, located near the southwest corner of the Bend urban growth boundary (UGB).

I oppose this bill for many reasons, foremost are the following:

- **Bill Design:** This bill has been designed to pre-empt an established bridge review procedure that is outlined in the *Oregon Wild and Scenic Rivers Act* for this segment of the Deschutes River. The adopted river protection statute stipulates a legitimate and suitable process for consideration of a proposed bridge like the one contemplated near the Bend UGB boundary. The bill, as written, cloaks the primary objective (to stop bridge construction) in a shroud of broader issues designed to enlist the support of other well-meaning environmental protection organizations. Support of this bill precludes a bridge from any further discussion or study. **Not supporting the bill simply means that a decision on building the south UGB bridge has not been finalized and that it will get fair consideration through a local process that is already in place.**
- **Bend Residents want a Bridge:** In 2012, the Bend Park and Recreation succeeded in gaining voter support of a \$29M Bond for construction of various park system improvements and amenities. While passage of a bond, clearly by itself, does not supersede Oregon law outright - it does demonstrate community support for the continued development of the Deschutes River Trail System *with a bridge*. The bond specifically called-out the bridge as a project – to be constructed at the subject location – but would be outright prohibited by this proposed HB, if passed. Supporters of the park district bond have repeatedly cited “the bridge” as a reason why they cast their vote *for* the bond. **The point is; it has been well-demonstrated that there are a vast majority of Bend area residents who are expecting that a fair evaluation of the bridge construction will move forward – not just a select few that want to cast a ‘legal veto’ and kill the project without the benefit of any further consideration.**
- **Environment Sensitivity:** The Bend Park District, as well as the city of Bend, have both demonstrated, in adopted plan (protection) policy and construction practice, a keen sensitivity and

respect for Bend's natural resources, especially the Deschutes River. Every project either agency has developed has been constructed in a manner that suitably evaluates and mitigates/limits negative impacts to the affected natural environment. Specifically - case in point - are the construction of new bike-pedestrian bridges in recent years; the South Canyon Bridge, the First Street Rapids Bridge and the Colorado B-P Bridge (another bond project). These serve as excellent examples where bridge projects and connecting trails can be built with adequate environmental protection. **This bill would not permit any further detailed study, planning or engineering that could adequately address any issues or provide development of possible suitable environmental impact mitigation elements.**

Sincerely,
Rick Root