

## Hamre Jaime

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**From:** Kermit Williams <kermit.donna@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 6, 2018 4:43 PM  
**To:** HAGNR Exhibits  
**Cc:** Kermit and Donna  
**Subject:** Testimony and support of HB4029

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

Dear members of the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources:

I strongly urge your support and vote in favor of HB 4029, which would offer protections for the Deschutes River. Portions of the Deschutes River are currently designated as a State Scenic Waterway and a Federal Wild and Scenic River.

A potential pedestrian bridge which is currently not allowed under the State Scenic Waterway designation would unnecessarily weaken the protections offered to the river and public lands along it. I am very concerned about this threat to weaken protections and the precedent that it would set.

My main concern is for wildlife. I live in a small community near the Upper Deschutes River south of Bend where nearby there exist protections from these two special designations. I do not live where the pedestrian bridge is proposed, but I fully understand the threats to wildlife and its habitat along this cherished river. I know that increased disturbance by human actions from any recreational use, whether it is hiking, biking, or pet walking, will add to the threats already facing such species as our mule deer, which are currently only at 50% of their sustainable population. Other species like the spotted frog, bald eagles, owls, elk, river otters, and Cougars could be impacted adversely by increased human presence.

I am a strong advocate for wildlife protections. For some reason, even though many people visit or move to central Oregon for its wildlife viewing and cherish wildlife's intrinsic values, our wildlife are not put at the top of the list when new development is considered. I ask that they be considered as a priority! A riparian habitat is essential for our wildlife to exist. Over the decades, more roads, development, wildlife unfriendly fencing, and increased trails with human activity from hiking, Mtn. Biking, and ATV use have adversely affected our mule deer and elk. They are losing their native habitat, migration corridors, and winter ranges. As a veterinarian, I fully understand that connectivity reductions impact genetic diversity, reproductive rates, and disease frequency, mainly from increased stress hormones produced as wildlife's natural forage and cover are reduced.

The existing administrative rule, OAR 736-040-0073 was put in place more than 20 yrs. ago. The legislature should uphold the intent by adopting HB4029 to ensure protections of this part of the Deschutes River remain in place primarily for the purpose of the benefits to our wildlife.

Respectfully submitted,

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Sent from my iPad