
From: Tom Carroll <tcarroll@cocc.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, February 7, 2018 10:24 AM
To: HAGNR Exhibits
Subject: Oppose HB 4029

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?Dear Oregon House of Representatives,

I am writing to oppose HB 4029.

It is my understanding that this proposal will be reviewed by a House Committee on Thursday, February 8th. I would like this committee to reject HB 4029 and not send it to the full House. If the House does receive this bill, I would like House members to reject this bill.

HB 4029 would ban construction of a much needed pedestrian bridge over the Deschutes River in Bend that would improve access to national forest service land. The Bend Park and Recreation District is hoping to construct a pedestrian bridge over the Deschutes River to connect the east and west sides of Bend. This would give folks living on the east side of town easy access to many outstanding hiking and biking trails on the west side.

The stretch of river under consideration is very scenic. However, it is far from being wild. Having walked the eastern side of the Deschutes at the proposed site yesterday, I can tell you that housing exists on both sides of the river in that area. This housing extends both upstream and downstream from the currently proposed bridge site. Plus yesterday, I saw heavy equipment clearing land for a 70+ housing development right at the bridge site. As far as the upriver section from the bridge, the east side of the river has housing (River Rim and Deschutes River Woods) for at least another mile south of the bridge site. The west of the river south of the bridge site is a mix of forest service land and private property. The federal land has some of the best hiking and biking in Oregon. And the private land west and upstream of the river has housing, a golf course (Widgi Creek) and a resort (Seventh Mountain Resort). So if anybody is trying to tell you that the stretch of river near the proposed pedestrian bridge is a wild river they are not being honest; ignore them.

According to recent editorials in the Bend Bulletin, the main push to ban the access bridge comes from a handful of very rich people who have built their MacMansions on the west bluff above the Deschutes river. It appears that they do not want to see us citizens walking, running or biking across the river to access our national forest land. It seems me the greatest good would be served by allowing the park district to build this bridge. This bridge would save a significant amount of time and gas driving to these trails. At the same time, the bridge would encourage more of us to use our federal land for recreation and exercise.

Personally, I can see no good reason to support a bridge ban at the spot proposed by the Bend Parks staff. Therefore, I oppose HB 4029 and urge our Oregon Representatives to vote against it.

Respectfully,

Tom Carroll

105 NW Drake Road

Bend, Oregon 97703