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**From:** Ariel T. Mendez <atmendez@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 7, 2018 11:39 AM  
**To:** HAGNR Exhibits  
**Subject:** Oppose HB 4209

Dear Chair Clem, Vice-Chairs McLain and Sprenger and members of the Committee:

I am writing to register my opposition to HB 4209, a bill that would ban a footbridge over the upper Deschutes River.

I happened to visit the area of the proposed bridge just this weekend for the first time. The parking lot, which was reportedly recently expanded, was completely full. While it was wonderful to see so many people out there with their dogs and kids enjoying the outdoors, it would be nice if we could provide public access in a way that does not rely on cars. Connecting trails with a bridge such as the one proposed by Bend Parks and Recreation District is an excellent way to do this. Trails have long been a priority for Bend residents, and residents approved the funds to construct this project in a recent bond measure.

The idea that banning footbridges would somehow protect this natural area is without merit: there are approximately a dozen houses in view of the bridge site and the sounds of a dirt motorcycle heard this past Sunday was a further reminder that are indeed not in the wilderness. The Forest Service can keep expanding the parking lot, or we can support car alternatives by connecting trails. In fact, if protecting natural habitat is the goal of bridge opponents, they actually should oppose the bill because better trails would reduce overall impact by guiding hikers and dogs, not to mention reducing the environmental impacts associated with driving to the site.

Let's be prudent and not pass this anonymous bill on false pretenses. Thank you for your consideration.

Ariel Méndez  
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