

To: The House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources

From: Lee M Stevenson, Sunriver, OR. 97707

This proposed Bill is an unnecessary maneuver that would have many, long-lasting negative repercussions to our communities that should be managed / decided with / by all community members who have intimate connections to the area and issues.

I am full time resident, year round outdoor athlete and a volunteer for 3 recreation groups. I have also participated in several different multi-agency full-day workshops held locally in the last 3- 5 years which focused on recreation, non-motorized travel and infrastructure. (Travel Oregon co-sponsored and ODOT and the Deschutes NF co-sponsored at least two.)

In attendance were a broad cross section of stake-holders concerned about easy access to the diverse public lands we have in Central Oregon, especially non-motorized travel.

Out of these collaborative workshops came many good ideas, including the popular Lava Lands pathway connecting Sunriver and the Newberry Monument Lava Lands Visitors Center. (A few residents voiced concerns which never materialized - thanks to good planning, collaboration and communication.)

Also, in the planning, are pathways connecting Sisters and Bend as well as the Lava Lands Visitors Center to South Bend (Burgess / Knott Rd.) which has had positive acceptance, due in part to local input and collaboration.

Yes, the proposed bridge may be in sensitive habitat / scenery, but let's not let some wealthy, influential individuals manipulate the rights and needs of our communities be neglected. And with proper community input and NEPA studies I am confident that a viable solution to the concerns of a very few individuals can be resolved.

FYI: This is not a designated Wilderness area, so the areas on both sides of our beloved river are already popular, so should have serious protection, but not exclusion.

Unfortunately, ODOT and the Deschutes NF, who have been valuable leaders in our future transportation plans can not weigh in on this crucial non-motorized link within our growing, recreation oriented communities.

Also, the House should recognize that this is much more than about a bridge; it is a decision that is a local issue with a broad and future social- economic- recreation- livability repercussions.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to a meaningful solution to a reasonable problem that can best be dealt with sensible local input and collaboration, not an unreasonable ban.

- Lee M. Stevenson

