

February 7, 2018

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

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

I have lived in River Canyon Estates in southwest Bend for over 12 years. **I am in favor of a footbridge being built across the river** to give myself and my family easy access to trails. I believe a compromise has to be made by all parties to ensure this happen. Here are my reasons why:

- I am an environmentalist and care about the health of the Deschutes River and the surrounding area. I am in complete agreement to protect the River; however, times have changed since this section was designated a state scenic waterway (I believe in the 70s) and we need to move forward. I am perplexed as to why there is not a group of environmentalists up in arms over the 70 plus homes being built next to the River Rim community and along the River as this will do far more damage to the area than a simple pedestrian bridge and leveraging many trails already in place. People will not be playing in this part of the River as we do in town, we just want to cross it. And sensitive areas can be protected to ensure people do not hurt the area.
- We need access from the southwest side of town especially as the southwest and southeast sides of town continues to grow. I am tired of driving 15 minutes to trail access and it will only get worse with Oregon State University expansion, the new Best Western Hotel, 600 plus homes that will continue to be built out in Northwest Crossing, Tetherow developing further, proposed apartments in the old Ray's location and the number of homes being built along Century Drive. Congestion is horrible and the Reed Market circle at Brookwood already has back up issues. Environmentally getting cars off the road is a good thing!!!!!! This is where the compromise comes into play - we are building, we need to find better option for people to get to the trails.
- I feel by prohibiting this footbridge, you are keeping my home value at a lower price than it should be. Homes are worth much more in the northwest area of Bend and mainly because of the easy trail access. My home is larger with more property than many homes in NorthWest Crossing yet homes are selling at a much higher price. Realtors have told me that trail access will increase home values.
- I could simply ride my bike to the trails and the kids in the area could ride their bikes to Cascade Middle School as there is a wide trail/bike path along Century to the school once across the river. Again, more cars off the road. Buses are overflowing with kids and the school district has a hard time hiring and retaining bus drivers. Having kids ride their bikes to school helps with this issue.
- The community of Bend voted and largely supports (72% to 14%) a footbridge crossing to connect the trail network.
- HB 4029 is in conflict with the Bend Transportation System Plan, the Deschutes Greenway Study and the Bend Park and Recreation District's Trail Plan. These plans have been in place for at least 2 decades. The Deschutes National Forest Alternative Transportation Plan further supports the bridge if the environmental concerns can be addressed. All of these plans call for a bridge to connect souther Bend to the

Deschutes National Forest in the same location that the District board has proposed the bridge to be located

I thank you for taking these points into consideration and I am hopeful a compromise will be made. This just should not be so difficult! I believe the Bend Park and Recreation district will ensure the environmental impact is acceptable to all parties as they have proven over and over with the trail expansion and River projects.

Sincerely,
Suzanne Monaco
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Bend, OR 97702