

Dear Chairman Clem, Vice-Chairs McLain and Sprenger and members of the Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

I support HB 4029.

With the area around Bend being overwhelmed with constant development and trail construction, it is refreshing to have at least a small portion of the Deschutes River protected from further human interference.

The many species of wildlife that frequent this protected stretch of waterway would no doubt agree that they need a special place to live and recreate as well.

Our family loves trails and recreation in Central Oregon as much as many of the residents here do. We live in Deschutes River Woods, which is very close to the proposed bridge location. But a bridge in this spot of the river would do us no good. The streets in the County have shoulders that are mere inches wide, and it is far too dangerous for our 3 children and ourselves to bike or walk to access any trails, even the ones that are close to our home.

A bridge in the proposed location mostly serves exclusive neighborhoods like River Rim. The private streets in that area prohibit parking, and so a bridge becomes a convenience only for the privileged residences of that small section of town.

I would rather see Bend Parks and Recreation create a larger infrastructure of trails within the urban core. Paths that wind through the concrete mess that we have already sacrificed, to enable the whole community to access the parks and river connections that already exist. Pedestrian bridges are needed to cross busy arterials like Highway 97 and 3rd St., not wildlife sanctuaries.

The Deschutes River is a gem of Oregon that should be protected and cherished for generations to come. Keeping delicate ecosystems unspoiled by human activity is the answer to promoting a healthy community.

Thank You,

Brice McMorris
Bend, OR