

Dear Members of the House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources:

I am writing to urge you to vote “yes” on the HB 2027 amendment.

While I am a bit proponent of outdoor recreation and am a huge outdoor recreationalist and trail user myself, I have seen first-hand the negative impact from “on trail and off trail” activities in terms of the pressure on wildlife in and around Bend. We are fortunate to have hundreds of miles of trails within reach here in Bend, but some public agencies like Bend Parks & Recreation continue to push for more convenience and access. This has had a real and noticeable affect on wildlife who used to have free range of these protected areas. I am writing to ask all of you to please take a stand by protecting the Upper Deschutes Scenic Waterway from further human encroachment.

The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) is actively exploring abolishment of environmental rules in the Upper Deschutes Scenic Waterway. OPRD’s rule abolishment would ultimately allow the Bend Park and Recreation District to construct a high-intensity bridge and trail system in this area. Disturbingly, OPRD has proceeded with this agenda against warnings from both the public and Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife biologists.

Legislative preservation of the Upper Deschutes is critical. The Upper Deschutes Scenic Waterway was consciously set aside by Oregon voters and must remain a protected area. Instead of honoring voter intent, OPRD is promoting development. This policy undermines the conservationist purpose of the Oregon Scenic Waterways Act. Further, abolishing environmental protections in Oregon scenic waterways would mark the beginning of an insidious trend. All Oregon scenic waterways are at risk which will include the wild and scenic Rogue River.

Passage of the HB 2027 amendment is vital to ensure continued protection of the Upper Deschutes Scenic Waterway and to affirm Oregon’s commitment to rivers statewide.

Thank you for defending Oregon’s rivers. Please vote “Yes” on HB 2027 amendment.

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