

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.

My family are ardent outdoor enthusiasts and spend time walking, hiking, biking, camping among other outdoor activities. We have seen first-hand the negative impact from “on trail and off trail” activities in terms of the pressure on wildlife. We no longer have elk bed down on our property because of human and human/pet encroachment. With 19 miles of trails within easy reach in Bend and our immediate neighborhood, we need to take a stand and protect the Upper Deschutes Scenic Waterway from further human encroachment. You will most likely not hear that BMPRD has a trial option available to them which would use existing trails to connect Bend with SunRiver and not require a bridge, save \$1 million plus in public funds and not require the taking of private property. It’s there to be used but not part of the BMPRD plan.

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.

Bob and Dellie Brell

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