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**From:** Stosh Thompson <stoshthompson@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 7, 2018 4:09 PM  
**To:** HAGNR Exhibits  
**Subject:** HB 4029

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

My name is Stephen Thompson and I am the manager of the Helen M. Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary in Deschutes County. I have a PhD in Animal Behavior and Ecology with an emphasis in Wildlife Management and served for eight years on the Deschutes County Planning Commission. I am writing in support of HB 4029. The Sanctuary is immediately adjacent to the site of a proposed bridge by the Bend Parks and Recreation District. I will be submitting written testimony with maps and photographs for the record. Herein is a condensed version.

The Thompson Wildlife Sanctuary was established in 1972, spearheaded by my mother, Helen M. Thompson, one of Oregon's leading conservationists. It includes 45 acres of prime wildlife habitat on both sides of the Deschutes River and coincides with the City's Area of Special Interest, where the primary goal is identified as wildlife habitat. It received the endorsement of the State Department of Fish and Wildlife, Deschutes County, and the City of Bend during its formation. In the absence of our ownership, there would have been as many as fifty houses up and down both sides of the river here.

The Sanctuary contains wetlands and soft banks on both sides of the river with islands in the middle, ideal habitat for many target species. The river is wide and shallow and is covered year round with a moderate water flow. This is the only stretch of river from Bend to Tumalo without residential development, a road, a bridge or a public trail along the river. The Sanctuary provides a rare opportunity for riparian species to follow their natural rhythms and activities. Deer find winter refuge here and follow the natural cycle of reproduction undisturbed year round. Wintering bald eagles perch low in trees by the river, ready to swoop on a duck or a fish at the surface of the water, or actually fish at the water's edge. Herons fish from the islands, undisturbed by river bank activity. River otters fish all along the river and haul out on the islands, while beavers are active during the daytime as well as at night. Nest platforms provide breeding sites for osprey. Nest boxes for a variety of cavity nesters are scattered throughout the Sanctuary. Quail find ample habitat in the open shrub land above the rim.

One of the most important aspects of the Sanctuary is that it is the main crossing point in the Upper Middle Deschutes for deer year-round. The crossing here maintains the critical connectivity for the herd from the east Cascades to the High Desert.

Other target species include elk, waterfowl, owls, woodpeckers, a wide variety of songbirds with an emphasis on marsh birds and cavity nesters, and especially the Oregon spotted frog,

which has been documented here. A number of other species of interest thrive here such as coyotes, bobcats, marmots, a variety of squirrels and rabbits, and others too numerous to mention.

The Sanctuary provides various habitat manipulations and enhancements to increase the number and diversity of target species, such as bird boxes, nesting platforms, hunting and resting perches, feeding stations, quail and small mammal refuges, rock, log and plant placement, wetland enhancement, pond and slough maintenance and native wildlife food plantings. No dogs are allowed on the refuge and activity by people is kept to a minimum. A busy bridge at the site BPRD is proposing would eliminate much of the natural wildlife movements and activities that I have described.

The only houses in the area of the bridge are located high on rims outside of the corridor, the one exception being the headquarters of the Sanctuary, which has been in place since the 50's. It sits 100' back from the river and is well screened. There is over a mile of river on either side of the proposed bridge site with no other houses on the river. This does not show up in aerial photos. Houses up on the rim have minimal effect on wildlife in the riparian corridor. The claims that development along the river has already occurred here or that this is a NIMBY issue are false. The environmental community and those who love and want to protect the river and its wildlife have been the chief proponents of HB 4029.

While there is no shortage of public recreation on the 25 miles of river trails from Sunriver to Tumalo, there is a serious shortage of protected year-round riparian habitat managed specifically for wildlife. HB 4029 extends and strengthens the protections afforded by the State Scenic Waterways Program in the river corridor where the Sanctuary is located. Together with the Sanctuary, it represents a significant level of protection for Central Oregon's beleaguered wildlife.