

February 8, 2018

Chair Clem and Honorable Committee members,

My name is Bruce Ronning. I live at 63960 Sunset Drive , Bend 97703. **I come before you in opposition to HB 4029 and in favor of the proposed “South Canyon Bridge”.**

My residence is approximately one half mile walking distance from Tumalo State Park and the northern terminus of the Deschutes River Trail. With the recently completed river trail improvements undertaken by the Oregon Park and Recreation Department the Bend Park and Recreation District, I can now walk along the Deschutes River Trail from my home to the district’s new Riley Ranch Park.

Though much in demand, residents of the south Bend area do not have this same type of convenient close to home river trail access. The 2006 city of Bend Transportation System Plan calls for creating convenient connections to the Deschutes River and the forest service trails for southern Bend residents. The South UGB bridge and trail crossing proposed by the park and recreation district is an integral element of that vision.

The vision for a continuous 30-mile long, Deschutes River Trail from Tumalo State Park to Sunriver has been included in numerous local planning efforts that I described in written testimony submitted to the hearings record. **This type of “close to home access” and “regional trail connectivity” is specifically called for in the 2011 - 2017 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and the 2016- 2025 Oregon Statewide Recreation Trails Plan. Both these planning documents are promulgated and managed by the Oregon Park and Recreation Department.**

I served for 14 years on OPRD grant advisory committees. During that time I reviewed numerous riverfront trail proposals across the state that include pedestrian bicycle crossings like the proposed South UGB trail bridge. These types of facilities are in high demand and many are now in place. This includes the recently completed Peter Courtney Minto Island Bridge in Salem.

Bend's "South Canyon Bridge" that was supported with a 2005 OPRD Local Government Grant lies in the Deschutes River canyon approximately 2 miles downstream of the subject "South UGB Bridge". However this existing bridge does not provide the same convenient access to the forest service river trails that the proposed South UGB Bridge can. Nor do the alternative trail routes proposed by Oregon Wild and others who have provided you with testimony.

If HB 4029 passes as currently written, it will benefit special interests to the detriment of thousands of south Bend residents and trail users. The Bend community at large strongly supports the bridge proposal as is exhibited in BPRD's statistically valid Comprehensive Plan survey done in March and April 2017. The Bend Bulletin has written numerous editorials in support of the trail bridge crossing. The current bridge proposal is located on Deschutes National Forest Land and will require extensive NEPA analysis and opportunities for public comment. It will also face local land use planning approval.

HB 4029 is unneeded, preemptory, special interest legislation. Appropriate and effective protections of the scenic and natural values of the Deschutes River can and will be developed through the federal NEPA and local planning processes. I urge the Committee to kill HB 4029 in preference to a community agreed upon, environmentally sensitive, practical solution to the much demanded South UGB crossing and river trail connections. Thank you.