

## Hamre Jaime

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**From:** Alan Bickett <abickett3@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 11, 2018 11:52 AM  
**To:** HAGNR Exhibits  
**Subject:** HB 4029 Comments

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Dear House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

I would like to enter comments on HB 4029, which would prevent building of a pedestrian bridge in certain segments of the Deschutes Scenic Waterway. I strongly urge you to vote No on HB 4029.

My wife and I live in the River Rim subdivision of Southwest Bend. The availability of access to the Deschutes River trail is a major benefit of living in this area. We walk on the trail several times per week, however, there is no walking access from the heavily developed area on the east side of the river where we live to the forested lands on the west side of the river. Instead, we must drive eight miles, passing through the heavily trafficked Old Mill area to get directly across the river.

I understand that one reason given to prevent the bridge is that it would cause damage to the river ecosystem. I believe this is a red herring rather than a legitimate concern. I strongly support environmental causes and am a contributing member of Greenpeace, the Oregon Natural Desert Association, Environment Oregon and Earth Justice among others. If I thought that addition of the proposed bridge would damage the natural environment I would not support it. Consider the facts:

- Downstream from the proposed pedestrian bridge location there are trails on both sides of the river, a heavily used footbridge, an irrigation district road and canal (partially piped) and finally, within 3 miles, a busy road crossing and heavily used urban parks.
- A short distance upstream from the proposed bridge location there are more than 8 miles of popular trail along the river, with several forest service road accesses points, ending at a pedestrian bridge near Sunriver above Benham Falls. Also upstream, there are homes above the river on the West side and homes right on the river on the East side.
- On the East side of the river near where the bridge is proposed a large subdivision is being built near the river. There is much more reason to be concerned about the impact of the subdivision than the impact of a simple pedestrian footbridge.

Given the development already existing and in progress on this section of the Deschutes River, the incremental impact of the proposed pedestrian footbridge would be negligible to nonexistent.

What a pedestrian bridge would do is allow hikers to access the trail network on the West side of the river without further crowding existing road and trails. It would save gas and decrease pollution and traffic congestion. It would further expand opportunities for Bend residents and visitors to enjoy and appreciate the beautiful environment that we love. Despite its abundant wildlife, the section of the Deschutes River at the South edge of Bend is not wilderness. Responsible decisions about its use should continue to be made by the local community rather dictated by state and federal officials.

It has been reported that some supporters of HB 4029 have their own reasons that have nothing to do with the environment or with what is right for the citizens of Bend and the State of

Oregon. Do not be influenced by specious arguments driven by self-interest. Instead, I ask that you carefully consider the facts and vote No on HB 4029. Thank you for considering my input.

Sincerely,

Alan Bickett  
19491 Sugar Mill Loop  
Bend, Oregon 97702