TO: Deschutes County Commissioners
DATE: MAY 15, 2024

I wish to have officially recorded this response to the Deschutes County campground proposal.

I have spent quite a bit of time studying and researching further your ECO Northwest analysis, specifically regarding the Ft. Thompson portion, as that is obviously the direction you, at least definitely Phil Chang, is advocating. I have also read the original 2-phase service contract and $99,580 cost with ECO Northwest.

Compared to other such analyses I have been familiar with, I am most impressed specifically with the thoroughness and unbiased recognition of concerns and likely conflicts. Often such "studies" are intended primarily to provide "justification" for a preconceived already-decided – on purpose. I did not read that herein.

Now, based on YOUR study's findings and MY personal and professional-related knowledge and experience, I am absolutely opposed to placing a 300+ unit RV park/campground on the county land designated Ft. Thompson in general and even more so on the inappropriateness on the western-most 40 acres.

I had originally intended on discussing/emphasizing the many concerns in the study, such as the many realistic and essential land-protecting laws, regulations, and restrictions that it affronts, but that would be too lengthy and offensive….

Instead, I ask you three to revisit and truly read and evaluate/ reevaluate the proposal and honestly think through the justification and realities of dealing with./confronting the many legal and environmental roadblocks and increasing organized area resident resistance, all of which will most assuredly far exceed the estimated $21 million cost of public tax-payer money.

Attached is the appropriate portion of the study on which I have color-highlighted that which I wish you to "think through."

I will definitely emphasize one finding of the report that may be "glossed over" or ignored in the push for the Ft. Thompson choice. That is the findings that the Drafter Road site (also $3.7 million vs. $21.6 million) IS THE PREFERRED OPTION (Section 8, "Conclusions and Recommendations"). Also, not directly mentioned in the report, but obvious to all intimately involved with Central Oregon outdoor recreation, is that the majority of these activities and opportunities are SOUTH of Bend, with the Lapine area far better suited for both a destination (proximity to recreation activities) and transitional/overnight (adjacent to major travel routes) campground. Again, are you choosing a $21,600,000 second choice over a $3,700,000 first choice??
Really??

Frankly, as a tax payer, after an almost $100,000 proposal expense and you now wish may NOT follow its conclusions, I reject your county leadership

Although I am not directly impacted by this proposed location, I now must "put on" my justifiable NIMBY hat and stand up for my neighbors who are on all **three** sides of this proposed area. This entire area is a high-quality much loved and appreciated neighborhood of small ranches, specific product farms, and dream homes with acreage. You should not, will not, diminish this valuable quality of life area of the county that YOU are responsible to protect. And as of this point in time, I know you have made NO effort to contact and involve them or even inform them of this proposal. And they are a respected voting population that you should actually be supporting and protecting., not threatening.

Finally, I must comment on recent statements by Phil Chang, "suggesting" (promoting? justifying?), what…. partial use of the Ft. Thompson area campground for a homeless camp? Near-by, part of, or in any way affiliated with a public FOR PAY campground.? Any such statements smell of political pandering . Is THAT a prime or even secondary motive? Understand this: some 40+ years ago, an extensive study/interview of campers was taken to determine essential developed campground requirements, and the TOP ABSOLUTE REQUIREMENT was SECURITY. Think about it; people often with minors, in an unfamiliar "woodsie" "outdoors" environment… And what are you suggesting…Loop A be for un-paying homeless/squatters? A more appropriate label for that loop/area nay be Juniper Ridge West….or China Hat North?

Quote from Page 9-22 , May 21,2024 Voters Pamphlet:

"With your vote I can continue to:

- .Preserve our quality of life and environment."

Phil Chang

I expect all of you to honor these words of commitment.

Please…Re-read and respect the findings and recommendations of the ECO Northwest report (that my tax dollars paid for).

Rich Niederhof
Retired Professional Forester
Professor Emeritus, COCC
Trustee, Greenlee Land Trust