



**992 W. Idaho Ave  
Ontario, OR 97914**

I strongly support the access fee proposed in HB 3122 for the use of Owyhee Lake Road. This fee is crucial for the preservation and safety of this valuable resource, especially given the significant impact from out-of-state visitors. Over the past decade, traffic on Owyhee Lake Road has increased exponentially, with a large majority of this traffic coming from out-of-state visitors. This surge in use, both vehicular and recreational, has brought a host of problems that desperately need addressing. Currently, traffic is unmonitored, creating a significant risk of invasive species being introduced to the reservoir via infected watercraft. This could have devastating consequences for the ecosystem.

The condition of the road itself is a major concern. Daily rockfalls, damaged pavement, and a lack of adequate width make driving hazardous. Without funding for maintenance, these dangers will only worsen. The lack of traffic management and supervision further compounds the safety issues. Tragically, the area below the dam has become increasingly unsafe. Reports of harassment, screaming, and even gunfire are deeply disturbing. It feels like only a matter of time before another serious incident, potentially a murder, occurs.

The increased traffic, largely driven by out-of-state visitors, has also placed a huge strain on the area's infrastructure. We desperately need regular trash pickup and significantly more restroom facilities. The current situation leads to overflowing garbage, unsanitary conditions, and environmental damage. The unsupervised hot springs is a prime example of this neglect. It's become a haven for drug use, with needles and broken glass littering the area. Parking at the hot springs is chaotic, with cars parked haphazardly and pedestrians walking in the road, creating a dangerous situation. The presence of wandering cattle adds another layer of risk.

During peak fishing seasons, the road becomes even more congested, with parked cars further reducing visibility and creating dangerous conditions for both drivers and pedestrians. Overcrowded campsites, often left filthy due to the lack of facilities, are damaging the environment. Vegetation is trampled, and new, unauthorized trails are constantly being carved out near the river. The unregulated river crossings by overlanders, in areas not designated as official fords, further contribute to erosion and habitat destruction.

The access fee proposed in HB 3122 is not just a fee; it's an investment in the future of Owyhee Lake. It's an investment in safety, environmental protection, and responsible recreation, particularly given the large proportion of out-of-state visitors contributing to the increased usage and subsequent problems. These funds are essential to address the urgent issues outlined above and ensure that Owyhee Lake remains a beautiful and accessible resource for generations to come. I urge you to support this vital measure.

**Sincerely,**  
**Friends of the Owyhee Staff**