

April 3, 2013

Subject: **Senate Bill 838**

Dear Senator,

I am a small scale miner, with a Federal Mining Claim, in the State of Oregon. I am writing to you today with regards to the latest bill (SB838) to ban suction dredge mining in the State of Oregon and I wish to have this letter entered into the Official Record in opposition to **SB838** when it comes up in committee.

Suction dredge mining is not harmful to the environment or fish and wildlife. Suction Dredging is “Less than Significant” as stated by the US Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Game’s 1994 and 2012 Final Environmental Impact Reports and the 2000 Forty-Mile River study financed by Region 10, Seattle, WA of the US Environmental Protection Agency, as well as several other studies.

Suction Dredge mining does not impact salmonid spawning or the survival of the early sensitive life stages. The miners are only allowed to work in the rivers and streams of Oregon for about 3-months each year. That is because the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife publish a list of in-water-work-periods which define when these sensitive life stages are NOT present and mining is safe to resume.

Upon reading this bill I am lead to believe that suction dredging is unregulated throughout Oregon’s waterways. In reality, suction gold dredging and small scale mining is already regulated by several state and federal agencies (Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Department of State Lands, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, US Forest Service and US Bureau of Land Management, to name a few).

Why is a 4 year moratorium on suction gold dredging needed? There is no reason other than the Environmentalists want it stopped as they have done in California. It is time for **YOU** to stop listening to the misinformation and outright lies the Environmentalists are spewing and read and listen to the truth.

Small scale mining, in Oregon, is a \$10.5 million industry. In these times of economic hardship in many of the rural communities in this state, why on earth would you want to destroy an industry that brings this kind of revenue to our state? I, alone, spend several hundred dollars every year in gasoline, food, lodging, equipment and other supplies in rural communities to prospect and mine for gold. These rural communities depend on miners for the continuation of their livelihoods.

One last comment: Mining, both large scale and small scale, is one of if not the most regulated industry in the United States of America. If miners do not know and follow the current rules and regulations already in place then they run the risk of being cited, arrested, tried and if found guilty, fined and imprisoned or both. Therefore, I urge you to vote **NO** on Senate Bill 838.

Sincerely,
Jon A. Becker
13230 SW 61st. Ave.
Portland, OR. 97219
503 734 8557