

**From:** Jim Haight

**Date:** April 6, 2013, 2:00:09 PM PDT

**Subject: Concerns about SB838 - Ban on Placer Mining within 300 feet of Anadromous/Bull Trout Waterways**

I am concerned about SB838, and the proposal to ban off-channel placer mining along anadromous and bull trout streams. The Forest Service, BLM and DOGAMI study the effects of all proposed mining operations, and administer these operations to be sure there are no adverse effects to the water or to the fish resources.

I live in Medford and have worked in Southern Oregon as a mining geologist. I am very concerned about the inevitably adverse effects of SB838. I was born and raised in northeast Oregon, and as a geologist, I worked there for many years as well. I can tell you from first-hand experience, that prospecting and locating new mineral deposits, and mining those deposits, are activities essential to the welfare of this State and its people. Shutting down the mineral industry in Oregon, at a time when jobs are scarce, and when there is a national need for developing this nation's mineral resources and providing jobs, makes no sense.

Most of the mining operations throughout Oregon work beside the streams and rivers, leaving a protective buffer along the waterways. The Forest Service conducts analyses to ensure that there is no risk of discharge from settling/recycling ponds or from mining excavations. Buffer widths are completely site-specific and are based on many factors, such as whether there are mounds of old tailings that work as a sediment barrier, if the topography grades away from the water way, if the area between the operation and the waterway is vegetated and other factors. The Forest Service uses "on-the-ground" surveys and BMPs to establish buffer widths. **Never do they advocate a "one size fits all" buffer of 300 feet, as is found in SB838.**

The mining industry is beginning to recover from a long period of low gold prices. Mid-sized placer operations are coming online throughout the mineralized areas of Eastern and Southern Oregon. These operations provide much-needed jobs, and they support the local communities with hundreds of thousands of dollars spent. Please vote No on this ill-conceived bill. It is bad for Oregonians.

Sincerely,

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