

April 10, 2013

Dear Senator Dingfelder and members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee:

I wrote the following letter which appeared in the Eugene register-Guard on March 20,2013. Please accept this as my support for the goals of SB 838. I urge committee members to vote in favor of this bill and amendments necessary to require the implementation of new regulatory framework.

Thank you.

Glen Love

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Letter to the RG Editor

Darold Smith's "Guest Viewpoint" (March 10) on the presumed benefits of dredging Oregon rivers for gold presents an idyllic picture of the practice: stirring up food for grateful fish, offering them, as well, a "carnival ride" through the dredger, providing "perfect" spawning beds, removing harmful mercury from the river, giving pleasure and profit to happy family dredgers, etc. As a fisherman and hiker, I'll take the quiet beauty of Oregon's waters any day to the noise, assorted machinery, and water turbidity of Smith's industrial model. I acknowledge his genuine enthusiasm and liking for it.

But all of the scientific studies of the effects of dredging on our streams and rivers that I have seen are either unsupportive of, or directly contradict, his judgments. The worst impact of suction dredging is that it ravages the ecology of stream bottoms and shorelines leading to such conclusions as these: "suction dredges directly kill aquatic insects, fish eggs and fish larva," "salmon spawning in areas with dredged tailings are likely to have their eggs scoured by winter floods, leaving fewer juvenile salmon," "although suction dredging can remove a substantial amount of mercury from sediments, it discharges mercury-laden sediments at hazardous levels." Such statements and their published scientific sources are available by googling Rogue Riverkeeper Dredging Effects, or Oregon State Senator Alan Bates' office for relevant fact sheets. Such findings have caused California to stop dredging, pending further review. Now more dredgers have moved to Oregon. We should do no less than California. Three Senate bills, SB115, SB370, and SB 401 await action.

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