



JACKSON COUNTY

Oregon

Board of Commissioners

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Senator Jackie Dingfelder, Chair
Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee
900 Court St. NE, S-407
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Senator Dingfelder:

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners wishes to express both its concern and opposition to proposed Senate Bill 401. Approval of SB 401 would add over 30 rivers and streams to the highly regulated Oregon Scenic Waterway program.

Jackson County recognizes and has fully embraced the economic benefits of tourism and recreational use of its rivers and streams. The County's recent removal of the Gold Ray Dam on the Rogue River serves as evidence of this. However, more red tape and highly restrictive land use regulations on the use of citizen's private property is not the way to accomplish this goal.

Under the Oregon Scenic Waterway program, land owners bordering scenic waterways who wish to build or alter their homes, outbuildings, barns and other structures, must have each improvement evaluated by Oregon State Parks and Recreation. This highly cumbersome process places further restrictions on the harvesting of timber and even impacts the types and locations of crops grown by farmers. The Oregon Scenic Waterway program requires all new development to be completely screened from the view of the river, homes are limited in height, and even private driveways require approval from Oregon State Parks and Recreation.

Particularly concerning to the Board of Commissioners is the inclusion of sections of rivers and streams which are primarily bounded by private property. The Board recognizes that the wild and scenic section of the Lower Rogue River and the beautiful setting of the North Umpqua River are special places where some additional rules to preserve these publicly owned lands may be warranted. However, the Rogue River, from its confluence with Bear Creek to its confluence with the Applegate River, is almost entirely bounded by private property, and is mostly developed. Application of the Oregon Scenic Waterway program in developed areas like this only adds expensive regulatory oversight with little effect.

Like most rural Oregon counties, Jackson County has struggled to maintain its economy, jobs, and way of life. Legislation such as this will not put Oregonians back to work and we urge you to not support Senate Bill 401.

Respectfully,



Don Skundrick, Chair



John Racher, Commissioner



Doug Breidenthal, Commissioner

cc: Senator Herman Baertschiger
Senator Alan Bates
Senator Bill Hansell
Senator Mark Hass
Senator Alan Olsen
Senator Doug Whitsett
Representative Peter Buckley
Representative Sal Esquivel
Representative Mike McLane
Representative Dennis Richardson