

March 11, 2013

City of Grants Pass



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

RE: SB 401
NOTICE OF OPPOSITION

Dear Senator Dingfelder:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Grants Pass to inform you that we oppose SB 401, in its current form, and urge your "No" vote.

SB 401 addresses suction dredge mining in 30 rivers by identifying them as State Scenic Waterways. One such river is the Rogue River which runs through the City of Grants Pass. The City understands the impacts of suction dredge mining and the importance of wild salmon runs, water quality and fish habitat.

SB 401 does much more than address suction dredge mining; SB 401 infringes on property rights and increases regulatory oversight. Besides impacting the river and suction dredge mining, SB 401 creates additional regulations on land along the river as it would place parts of the river, specifically a portion of the Rogue that runs through the City of Grants Pass, into the State Scenic Waterways. State Scenic Waterways requires the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) to be notified of certain activities proposed within a ¼ mile of the bank of Oregon's designated scenic waterways. Such activities include cutting of trees, mining, construction of roads, railroads, utilities, buildings, or other structures. The proposed uses or activities may not be started until the written notification is approved, or until one year after the notice is accepted.


SB 401 would prohibit property improvements, development and numerous other activities not conducive to "scenic values" inside such easements and place public property under additional regulatory jurisdiction.

While this bill may be well-intended, it applies a flawed approach that fails to appreciate the spectrum of issues that affect private property rights and economic vitality.

The City of Grants Pass requests this letter be placed in record showing our opposition to SB 401.

We urge your "No" vote on this measure.

Sincerely,


Darin Fowler
Mayor

CF#: 13-36

cc: City Council