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To: **Members of Senate Environmental and Nature Resource Committee**

Jackie Dingfelder, Chair
Alan Olsen, Vice Chair
Alan Bates
Bill Hansell
Mark Hass

NO on Senate Bill 115

NO on Senate Bill 370 ✓

NO on Senate Bill 401

It is obvious Senator Bates has an anti-mining agenda. I am very surprised by this seeing a large number of his constituents (in the southern part of the state) are active miners.

Senate Bill 115 is obviously a companion to **Senate Bill 370** which basically will kill all commercial placer mining for the small mom and pop operator. \$125./year might not seem like a lot, but all the regulations and hoops to jump through along with the fee, will be a negative impact on this industry. I thought we were trying to CREATE jobs, not kill them.

His other bill, **Senate Bill 401** is even worse. Again, many of the areas being purposed as Scenic Waterways are in the heart of mining country. An example is Brice Creek near Cottage Grove. The entire history of this city is based on the Bohemia Mining District. Ever hear of the Bohemia Mining Days? The city's economy relies in part on mining tourism. Brice Creek which falls under the jurisdiction of the U. S. Forest Service is a multi-recreational use area. Miners, swimmers, campers, fishermen, off road vehicles, etc. are on this creek nearly year round. It is the miners who consistently are picking up the trash left by others. Plus they remove mercury from the waterways and provide improved fish habitat. They take great pride in their claims and I feel are the best caretakers of the land. I realize SB 401 exempts the majority of the small miners in the district, but it sends a negative message – Senator Bates and his environmental supporters don't like mining. It's important to remember, Oregon waterways are for ALL Oregonians.

I am not a dredger, but was the Executive Director of Oregon Independent Miners back in the 1990's. We worked very closely with the Division of State Lands, Fish & Wildlife, Water Resources, Recreation, and DEQ (to mention a few) to reach reasonable

legislation allowing placer mining and also protecting the waterways. We were also the group that successfully got the Mineral Trespass bill. Through all of this we did extensive research and studies on placer mining, not only in Oregon but in California. We provided on the ground opportunities for the legislators out on the claims to actually get in the water and experience panning and dredging. It took a tremendous amount of time and effort on everyone's part (for both sides) to get educated. All facts prove that placer mining is not harmful to the waterways as long as the water remains free-flowing and it's not done during periods when fish eggs are present. Our group helped define ORS 517.120 to 517.133.

I can remember testifying in front of some committee holding a child's small beach bucket of dirt showing how much creek bed would be removed by panning. Some folks wanted the miners to get a permit for that little bit of removal. In the end I believe it was part of identifying recreational mining as not moving more than 5 cubic yard maximum per year (ORS 196.810).

Therefore I feel I am writing with some stake in what happens to the future of placer mining in Oregon. The legislation passed back in the 1990's has worked very well for the last fifteen years. Brice Creek is as beautiful today as it was then. One winter storm can move more water down that creek than the miners could ever hope too.

These three mining bills will only create more rulemaking, paperwork and time for the involved agencies. I thought the State is trying to find ways to cut back, not grow in expenditures.

Please vote NO on Senate Bills 115, 370 and 401. They are not good for Oregon! When the rules get too stringent, people will ignore them and we all lose. I have included copies for each bill file. Thank you for your consideration.



Sue Hallett

Enclosed: Duplicate copies for Senate Bill 370 and 401 bill files.
cc. Senator Floyd Prozanski