

April 17, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing today to urge you to put a moratorium on suction dredge mining in the state of Oregon. Your invaluable efforts in banning this activity can benefit humans and our environment immediately and for generations to come. Our rivers, those that benefit from their pristine nature and the wildlife that inhabit them need your help now.

As a resident of Southern Oregon, a commercial river guide on the Rogue River and a university instructor of Outdoor Leadership I have witnessed the positive impact on people having meaningful experiences on our amazing rivers. These same people are students, tourists, and Oregonians who will potentially spend their hard earned dollars in our local communities, potentially be positively influenced to be greater stewards of natural resources, and perhaps return to enjoy Oregon's rivers many more times. However, this is all at risk due to the negative impacts of suction dredge mining on these meaningful experiences.

Your efforts as elected government officials in Salmon population rehabilitation have been remarkable in the last decade. A specific example of these monumental efforts by many would be the removal of three dams, Savage Rapids, Gold Ray and the Gold Hill Powerhouse Dam on the Rogue River. The irony of personally seeing over 50 suction dredges operating in a four mile stretch of river below the former site of the Gold Ray Dam surely cannot be lost on you. On the surface the din of combustion engines can be heard from a remarkable distance not only impacting human visitors to the river, but the wildlife that rely on these waterways and there banks as safe homes. Below the water spawning grounds are being destroyed by the second and turbid plumes of debris trail downstream impacting the wild and hatchery raised fish. Not only are current legal activities being done by the suction dredgers, but endless violations occur as well. Miners gassing up their pumps on the water and gas cans on the dredges are common sites. Point source pollutants such as petroleum products do not belong in our rivers. Unfortunately, it is very challenging to enforce the rules regulating suction dredge mining in our state and a couple of thousand dredgers are impacting our rivers not only in harmful ways now, but for generations to come.

I urge you to follow in the footsteps of the state of California and ban suction dredging in our state before it is too late. Thank you for your hard efforts in this battle to protect our invaluable waterways and those that benefit from their pristine nature.

Sincerely,

Erik Sol