

Hello,

This email is being sent to show my opposition to the senate bills 401 and 838.

My name is Gary Lee, I own the Rock'n Ore Mining supply in Myrtle Creek Or., we are a family owned and operated recreational gold mining equipment store off the South Umpqua. We make our living to support ourselves and our kids on selling mining supplies and dredges. Needless to say these bills would greatly impact our ability to pay our bills. We attended the meeting on April 15th but we have decided to write this letter because we were low on the list to speak. We see a lot of people in our store and as far as I can tell the people out doing this for the most part are just out to have some family fun on the river, which is true for our family and friends as well, very few are out there every day, in fact only a very small handful are out there every day in the in water dredge season,(usually the summer months) it's a lot of work and a person is not able to move, process, dredge very much ground in the course of any given day or month for that matter, it's just not physically possible with the equipment we are allowed to use under the current regulations. A lot of the new interest stems not from the Californians, because a lot of them have been coming here and buying permits for a lot of years. The big interest stems from all the shows on TV and the high price of gold in a bad economy. People think they are going to strike it rich so they buy some equipment and get all there permits and run out there to find it's a lot of hard work for the little bit of payback they receive, so at that time they realize maybe we should just make this a hobby and they only go out a few times a year. Keep in mind there is only a few really accessible areas on the entire river system that a person can access without a tremendous effort, the equipment is not light or easily packable. As far as turbidity goes I have stood on a hill in an area where multiple dredges are working and the turbidity off the end of all of them together does not come even close to the amount that the DEQ allows for just one. And the toxins that were used in the past are just not used today, but they are removed by the miners, in a season a dredger will clean pounds of lead, and even some mercury out of the river system, because these materials are heavy they stay in the sluice box with the gold so they are processed out of the material and disposed of. Salmon and Steelhead runs are important, I fish and a lot of my friends and customers fish. We all agree that there has to be a balance, and maybe someone should be looking at the small and large mouth bass in the rivers that eat everything that swims by, (we watch them while we dredge), or the sucker fish and bullhead fish that you can't keep off your hook when you're trying to catch a salmon or a steelhead using roe, or the abundance of seals and sea lions that are swimming miles inland to chase and eat a lot of the migrating fish, or maybe the commercial fisherman and the foreign processors sitting not far off shore in international waters, or maybe that guide that is advertising to bring in people from everywhere to catch and keep the fish they catch. It's just not all us, We invite you all down to take a look and see what we do. Thank You for reading!

Thank You,

Gary and Special Lee
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