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Date: April 11, 2013, 8:18:47 AM PDT
To: <Beth.Reiley@state.or.us>
Subject: SB 838 Testimony

Testimony of Melanie Mindlin
for the Oregon Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee in support of Senate Bill 838 relating to suction dredging

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in writing. I strongly support Senate Bill 838, which would enact a moratorium and create a new regulatory framework for suction dredge mining in Oregon's streams and rivers.

I am a permaculture designer and instructor offering sustainable land use consultation in Southern Oregon and instruction throughout the state. We are teaching people an array of regenerative practices that will restore fertility to Oregon's soils in both fields and forests.

One of the keystones of fertility in northwest forests is the return of the salmon. This is not a symbolic concept, nor a religious stance, nor a desire for food or recreation from fishing, although I believe all those needs are valid. Salmon literally bring nutrient fertility out of the oceans, and after being eaten by other animals, spread it throughout the forests. This was a key to cycles of fertility in our forests before the loss of salmon. Fertility in Oregon forests is in rapid decline as we continue to mine it for lumber and have no salmon to bring lost fertility back to the woods. Bringing back the salmon is essential to the longterm health of our land.

Oregon has been taking actions to protect and encourage the return of salmon to our rivers. This has involved many people and large complex decisions, like the removal of certain unnecessary dams. Huge efforts to move fish around dams have been undertaken and paid for by the citizens of Oregon. Controlling pollution, controlling municipal wastewater entering rivers, restoration of habitat throughout salmon spawning grounds--all these efforts by so many have been directed towards bringing the salmon back. To allow individuals to destroy a rivers ability to support salmon through a purely personal and pecuniary act like suction dredging is outrageous.

Every season that goes by with salmon being killed in a particular stream or river is a huge setback to the environment of the entire watershed where this occurs.

Please act now to stop suction dredging.

Thank you,
Melanie Mindlin