

**From:** Bart  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 17, 2013 3:59 PM  
**To:** Reiley Beth  
**Subject:** Suction dredge

Testimony of Bart Baldwin before the Oregon Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee in support of Senate Bill 838 relating to suction dredging

April 17th, 2013

Senator Dingfelder and members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Bart Baldwin and I am here to speak as a citizen of Oregon. I support Senate Bill 838, an act to enact a moratorium and create a new regulatory framework for the practice of suction dredge mining in Oregon's streams and rivers.

I have been a river guide in Oregon for 18 years and count on our rivers for my livelihood as a guide. I have guided on the rivers of southern Oregon and northern California where I have seen the activity of suction dredge mining and have never thought it much of a problem in the past. However, over the last few years this has changed and the activity has become more of an issue on our rivers, especially on the middle Rogue outside of Gold Hill.

There has been a major increase in the amount of suction dredges along this section of river which I have some concern around. When I started guiding on this section of river, there were 4 or 5 dredges and they never seemed to bother anyone. Now, there are upwards of 25 within a very short section of river and I have many concerns around the amount of dredges in the river and the impacts they have not only to the river but to the safety of rafters and fishermen that are also floating this section.

What I have seen, and therefore my concerns are the great amount of noise that these dredges create, the chemical component and/or possibility of pollution from gas, oil, etc, ropes in the river, giant holes in the banks, and the virtual "homesteading" in popular areas that the general public also frequents.

The noise caused by all of these dredges is frustrating and difficult to deal with as a guide and I often find myself almost yelling to my guests in order to talk to them. I have seen gas cans on the dredges and am concerned about harmful pollutants spilling into the river and potentially harming people and fish swimming downstream. On a number of occasions I have seen ropes in the water, which is a great safety concern to anyone who knows anything about moving water with people involved. I've see giant holes in the banks of the river which is destructive and illegal. And I have seen miners "camped out" along the banks of the river, trashing the area and preventing the general public from wanting to visit the river and its shores.

These are my concerns around suction dredge mining as a river user and someone who is dependent on quiet, scenic recreation for my job. While I am not in favor of taking away someone's livelihood, I am in favor of protecting our rivers and using them responsibly and sustainably so that everyone might enjoy their time on our Oregon rivers.

Thank you.

Bart Baldwin – Professional River Guide, Ashland Oregon