

TESTIMONY OPPOSING SB 838 AND SB 401

GOOD AFTERNOON CHAIR DINGFELDER/COMMITTEE MEMBERS

I ASK THAT MY TESTIMONY BECOMES PART OF THE PUBLIC RECORD.

MY NAME IS CHARLES V (CHUCK) CHOATE

I LIVE IN KEIZER, I AM A SMALL SCALE MINERAL MINER AND I OPPOSE SENATE BILLS 401 AND 838.

SENATE BILL 838 STATES AS JUSTIFICATION:

“ Whereas mining using motorized equipment in the beds and banks of the rivers of Oregon has increased considerably in recent years; and
whereas the number of conflicts resulting from mining using mechanized equipment in the beds and banks of the rivers of Oregon has increased; and
Whereas mining using motorized equipment in the beds and banks of the rivers Oregon can pose significant risks to Oregon’s natural resources including fish and other wildlife and the investments of this state in habitat enhancement”.

NOW I ASK YOU CHAIR DINGFELDER AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS WHERE IS THIS INFORMATION COMING FROM?

WHAT CONFLICTS RESULTING FROM MINING USING MECHANIZED EQUIPMENT IN THE BEDS AND BANKS OF THE RIVERS THROUGHOUT THE STATE HAVE OCCURRED ? CONFLICTS BETWEEN WHOM? WHERE HAVE THEY OCCURRED AND WHEN?

WHAT EMPIRICAL DATA ARE BEING USED TO JUSTIFY A MORATORIUM ON ALL MECHANIZED MINING IN OREGON FOR FIVE YEARS.

SENATE BILL 838 ALSO STATES: mining using motorized equipment in the beds and banks of the rivers of Oregon has increased considerably in recent years; and Whereas mining using motorized equipment in the beds and banks of the rivers of Oregon can pose significant risks to Oregon's natural resources, including fish and other wildlife and the investments of this state in habitat enhancement".

AGAIN I ASK FROM WHAT INFORMATION VERIFIES THESE CLAIMS? ARE THE AUTHORS OF SENATE BILL 838 CLAIMING THAT DREDGING DAMAGES STREAM BEDS OR FISH NESTS? IF SO WHAT SCIENTIFIC DATA VERIFIES THAT MINING USING MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT POSES SIGNIFICANT RISKS TO OREGON'S NATURAL RESOURCES. ARE THESE AUTHORS DISREGARDING THE REGULATIONS CURRENTLY ENFORCED TO PROTECT FISH HABITAT AND NESTS.

ARE THE AUTHORS ALSO TAKING INTO CONSIDERATION THAT CURRENT REGULATIONS SPECIFICALLY PROHIBIT THE REMOVAL OR DISTURBANCE OF STREAM SIDE VEGATATION IN A MANNER THAT MAY IMPACT WATER QUALITY.

I SUBMIT TO YOU THAT THERE IS NOT SUFFICIENT RELIABLE DATA THAT MECHANIZED SMALL SCALE MINING CREATES CONFLICTS OR DAMAGES FISH AND WILD LIFE HABITAT TO MERIT PROHIBITING ANY FORM OF MINING USING MOTORISED EQUIPMENT

I ALSO SUBMIT THAT PLACING A MORITORIUM ON ALL MINING WITH MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT WILL SUFFICIENTLY IMPACT THE ECONOMY OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES.

THE GOLD PANNERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA SPONSORED A GOLD AND TREASURE EXPO AT THE OREGON STATE FAIRGROUNDS MARCH 29 & 30TH.. I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO ASK THEIR REPRESENATIVE HIS ESTIMATE OF THE FINANCIAL BENEFIT TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY THE EXPO BROUGHT IN. HE TOLD ME THAT GPAA PAID THE FAIR GROUNDS \$14,000.00 TO PUT ON THE EXPO. HE FURTHER STATED THAT GPAA SPENT AN ADDITIONAL \$3,000.00 FOR EXPENSES. HE FURTHER ESTIMATEDED THAT EXPO BROUGHT IN ABOUT \$60,000.00 TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY.

REGARDING SENATE BILL 401
DESIGNATING THE MOLLALL RIVER AND QUARTZVILLE CREEK AS
SCENIC RIVERS IS A BAD IDEA. BOTH OF THESE RIVERS ARE
HIGHLY USED BY THE PUBLIC FOR RECREATIONAL USE INCLUDING
SMALL SCALE PLACER MINING. BOTH OF THESE RIVERS HAVE
AREAS DESIGNATED BY BLM AS RECREATIONAL CORRIDORS. THE
ECONOMIC IMPACT WILL BE SIGNIFICANT TO LOCAL MERCHANTS
SUPPORTING THE USERS OF BOTH RIVERS. THE LOCAL
LANDOWNERS WILL BE IMPACTED AS WELL.
THIS IS JUST A BAD IDEA. OREGONIANS ARE CONSISTITLY LOSING
ACCESS TO THEIR PUBLIC LANDS. WE DON'T NEED TO TAKE THE
MOLLALLA RIVER AND QUARTZVILLE CREEK AWAY AS
WELL.PLEASE LET SB 401 GO AWAY.
THANK YOU
CHUCK CHOATE

Chuck Choate

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