

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

I urge you to support Senate Bill 838 to implement a 5-year moratorium on suction dredge mining in Oregon's streams and rivers and to establish a new regulatory framework for this damaging practice.

The Damage of Suction Dredge Mining:

The science is in on this, suction dredge mining destroys fish habitat by producing sediment. Miners may sincerely believe that the sediment they cause is minimal and not of significant impact because it is not highly visible in disturbed water, but fish biologists are in agreement that the silt released in low flow areas (where miners work) settles not too far downstream and chokes the spawning grounds for endangered fish species here in Oregon.

Harder Impact on Oregon since CA Banned Suction Dredge Mining:

It is even more important at this time to pass this bill because since suction dredge mining was banned in CA, we are getting an influx of people coming to Oregon to dredge. The damaging impact on our streams and rivers has greatly increased and will continue to do so if you do not pass this bill.

I was born and raised in Oregon, lived elsewhere from 1978 to 2005, then moved back to Oregon for the beauty of the forests and rivers and to live a lifestyle in harmony with the environment. My husband and I have 15 acres at a headwater spring-fed tributary stream that flows to Grave Creek which is a tributary of the Rogue River. It is unthinkable to us to do anything on our land that would damage the fish habitat and the health of the creeks and rivers downstream. There is no dividing nature up into sections. Everything affects everything else. Suction dredge mining is not confined to the small area in which it happens, but rather has a (literal) downstream affect which must be regulated for the health of the whole ecosystem. The affects of mining must be monitored in relation to its impact on the Commons.

Please support Bill 838.

Thank you,
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