



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON

February 26, 2013

To: House Land Use Committee
Representative Brian Clem, Chair
Members of the Committee

Re: HB 2201 and HB 2202, Related to mining on high quality farmland-SUPPORT

The League is a non-partisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed citizen participation in government. We believe that Oregon's most fertile farmland is a precious and finite resource that should be carefully preserved, and we have provided consistent testimony on this issue over many years. Our support is based on our land use positions developed through in-depth study and consensus. We gained further insight into this long-standing land use conflict when we participated in the lengthy deliberations of the Aggregate/Farmland Consensus Group, which met from 2004 to 2006.

The League believes that both the aggregate and farming industries supply a critical public need. But while we have no concern that Oregon will run out of rock in the foreseeable future, we have a great deal of concern when confronted by the alarming rate that our best farm soils are being lost to aggregate mining in the Willamette Valley. This is why we support both HB 2201 and HB 2202, which in our opinion provide reasonable compromise approaches to a difficult issue.

HB 2201 would ensure that aggregate sites with over 25 per cent of prime, unique, or Class I or II soils be reclaimed over time to the same quality as originally existed. HB 2202 requires an alternative analysis before mining permits are granted for land containing five or more acres of Class I and II soils. Neither bill forbids mining on a site, but they do provide far more protections for Oregon's best soils than currently exist. The League strongly urges a "do pass" on HB 2201 and 2202. Thank you for the opportunity to present our views.

Sincerely,

Robin Wisdom
President

Marge Easley
Natural Resources Specialist