

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and Committee members:

I'm Steve Wildish, Vice President of Wildish Sand & Gravel Co. located adjacent to the city of Eugene in Lane County. Our family has been in the sand and gravel business for over 60 years. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today. I'm here today, on behalf of my company and the Oregon Concrete and Aggregate Producers Association to voice our opposition to House Bill 2201 and House Bill 2202.

With respect to HB 2201, requiring that a mine site be reclaimed to farm use is clearly not achievable and is directly at odds with state policy requiring deep mining. Deep mining (60' or more), reduces the mining footprint and takes advantage of a sand and gravel resource that can reach well over 100' in depth.

In our case, we currently mine approximately 80' deep prior to reclaiming the mine site. It is not possible to fill in a mine of this depth, absent a small dump site area. Instead, banks are sloped, a lake is formed. We leave behind a site that is environmentally sound and compatible for a variety of uses and wildlife.

With respect to HB 2202, replacing our objective Goal 5 criteria with a subjective standard as provided in HB 2202, would be devastating. Since most all areas available for mining in the Willamette Valley include Class II soils, the alternatives analysis provided in House Bill 2202 would be the new “standard.”

HB 2202 will take what was possible and make it impossible. The passage of HB 2202 only makes sense if the purpose is to virtually kill all efforts to create new sand and gravel sites in the Willamette Valley.

HB 2202 will make the pursuit of a site, too expensive, too uncertain and too litigious for any operator, especially for the few remaining family businesses in our industry.

Twenty years ago, our neighbors came to us, offering to sell their 200 acres of Class II soil farm land, contiguous to our property. They said the land was unproductive and contained shallow layers of topsoil. In some areas, rocks sit on top of the soil. We purchased the land, which contains 100’ or more of gravel, for future expansion of our sand and gravel operation. This land is our future.

We built a bridge over the McKenzie River to convey sand & gravel across the river to our processing plant. We built a dike almost two miles long to protect our property from floodwaters. We built a state of the art concrete plant to serve our communities for generations to come. These capital investments were made looking to our future, a future that becomes terribly uncertain if we replace our Goal 5 process with HB 2201 and HB 2202.

Sand & gravel supply needs to locate near our communities. Heading for the hills is not the answer. Quarries have their own environmental challenges and are most often located away from the market, resulting in higher processing and trucking costs and a larger carbon footprint. The Willamette Valley has blessed us with an abundance of sand and gravel. We ask that you help us to continue to serve our communities by rejecting HB 2201 and HB 2202.

Thank you,

Steven Wildish, Vice President

Wildish Sand & Gravel Co.

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