



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON

April 16, 2015

To: House Committee on Rural Communities, Land Use and Water
Representative Brian Clem, Chair
Members of the Committee
ian.davidson@state.or.us

Re: HB 2666 – Changes Process for Approving Mining Permits - OPPOSE

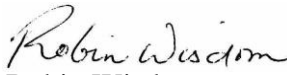
The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed citizen participation in government. We support policies that promote both conservation and development of land as a natural resource, in accordance with Oregon's land use goals. Oregon's land use system was designed to achieve a balance between competing resources by establishing a careful process when conflicts arise. We strongly oppose HB 2666, because it would shift the balance and overly favor the mining industry by altering key criteria for siting a mine on exclusive farm use (EFU) land.


HB 2666 considerably changes the intent of ORS 215.296, the statute which governs approval of certain uses in EFU zones, by requiring careful analysis in determining whether owners of "surrounding lands" would suffer significant adverse effects from a proposed mining use. HB 2666 redefines "significant" by saying that to be denied the mining site must cause "an ongoing farm or forest practice to be abandoned" or render "the farm or forest practice economically infeasible." It redefines "surrounding lands" as "land within 1,500 feet of the perimeter of the mining area." Much stricter criteria is also set for when mitigation is required.

Lastly, HB 2666 stipulates that an applicant for a mining permit need only comply with applicable federal, state, and local environmental standards, as well as transportation standards set by the Department of Transportation. This is considerably less than the more stringent standards laid out in ORS 215.296, county ordinances, and county transportation plans.

The League believes that this bill is unnecessary and not in keeping with Oregon's land use goals. We urge a "no" vote on HB 2666.

Sincerely,


Robin Wisdom
LWVOR President


Marge Easley
LWVOR Action Committee