

April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015

**Testimony of Robyn Janssen before the Oregon Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee in support of Senate Bill 830 relating to mining for precious metals in and near streams**

Dear Senator Edwards and members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee,

My name is Robyn Janssen and I am a native southern Oregonian, river guide, recreational fisher person and a river conservationist. I am writing to urge you to vote in favor of Senate Bill 830 with the amendments proposed by Senator Bates.

I have been a river guide on southern Oregon Rivers for nearly 18 years. As a river guide I get to introduce people to Oregon's amazing rivers and the beautiful scenery that is all around. However, over the years I have seen these rivers become threatened, marred and crowded with the practice of suction dredge mining.

Through my experience as a guide, recreationist and conservationist I've learned about and seen the harmful impacts that suction dredge mining can have on sensitive aquatic species and their habitat. And while this is my primary concern, I've also experienced the negative impacts that suction dredge mining can have on other forms of quiet recreation such as rafting and fishing.

Senate Bill 830, accompanied by Senator Bates amendments, directly addresses the impacts to salmon and other sensitive aquatic species and their habitat, provides the state with more sufficient resources to better manage this regulatory program, and contains permitting under a single state agency.

I strongly support the measures in Senate Bill 830, primarily those that would,

- Place a limit to the amount of permits issued for suction dredge mining at 850.
- Prohibit mining in sensitive species habitat (essential salmon habitat, lamprey, bull trout and mollusks)
- Create permit fees that will substantially cover the cost of an effective program administered by DEQ to analyze, issue and enforce
- Address mining in riparian areas that affect aquatic resources
- Limit mining where it would undermine Oregon's investment in salmon habitat restoration

Over the last 6 years, I have seen the numbers of dredge miners go from 4 to 40 on one particular section of river, having a great impact on a small area that is used by several different interest groups. It has a direct, negative impact on rafters, fishermen, hikers and landowners along the river due to the noise, pollution, danger and oftentimes attitudes of the miners. While I don't feel as though I get to say who does what and where I do feel like an activity that affects others in a negative way should be limited and regulated so as to mitigate those impacts.

Oregon has spent millions in dam removal, habitat restoration, riparian projects and more and I find it hard to believe that we would continue to allow harmful practices like suction dredge mining in our sensitive rivers and streams after all of the work we have done restoring them.

I question any activity when it benefits a small minority, isn't contributing much to our local economy or quality of life, is harming the aquatic life in our rivers and is creating a negative experience for people whose activities are positive, sustainable (economically and environmentally) and have very little impact on anyone else. I have watched the fishing and rafting industries grow and flourish over the years in our region. They are activities that are sustainable, healthy, positive, and contribute greatly to our local economies. People enjoying these activities make a direct connection to our rivers, the environment and with each other, which I believe can only bring about good things for all of us.

We are in an age where there are many more people in our outdoor spaces. We must learn to share and care for these places so that they may continue to be enjoyed by this and generations to come. Continuing to allow the unfettered permitting of this practice while it continues to be poorly monitored, poorly regulated and improperly fee'd is a negligence that Oregon cannot afford.

Thank you for your time and consideration in supporting SB 830 for the betterment of Oregon's rivers, fish and recreational economy.

Sincerely,  
Robyn Janssen

River Guide with Momentum River Expeditions  
Clean Water Campaigner with Rogue Riverkeeper