

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Senate Committee On Environment and Natural Resources****Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact**Action Date:** 04/20/15**Action:** Without Recommendation As To Passage, But W/Amendments And Requesting Referral To Ways And Means. (Printed A-Eng)**Meeting Dates:** 04/16, 04/20**Vote:**

Yeas: 4 - Dembrow, Edwards, Olsen, Prozanski

Nays: 1 - Thomsen

Prepared By: Beth Reiley, Committee Administrator**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Directs Environmental Quality Commission (EQC) to adopt consolidated permitting program for motorized in-stream placer mining and motorized upland placer mining. Repeals moratorium on mining using motorized equipment. Limits combined total number of permits for motorized in-stream or upland placer mining to no more than 850 annually and authorizes establishment of management zones. Requires adoption of certain rules related to application review, permit issuance and permit conditions. Requires Department of Environmental Quality and Department of State Lands to enter into memoranda of agreement assigning department duties related to placer mining permitting. Requires operating permit to engage in motorized in-stream placer mining or motorized upland placer mining. Prohibits motorized in-stream placer mining or motorized upland placer mining in certain protected areas and certain watersheds. Imposes civil penalties of not more than \$1,000 per day for violating permit provisions. Establishes violation of permitting provisions is Class A violation. Authorizes EQC to establish operating permit fees. Establishes operative date of January 2, 2017. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Efforts of interim work group established by Senate Bill 838 (2013)
- Impact of motorized suction dredge mining in rivers
- Benefit of consolidated permitting process

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

Replaces measure.

BACKGROUND:

In 2013 the Legislative Assembly passed Senate Bill 838 which imposed certain restrictions and conditions on placer mining between January 1, 2014 and January 2, 2016 and set a limit of 850 permits that Department of State Lands may issue for placer mining during this period. Under the measure, these restrictions are repealed on January 2, 2016, and a moratorium is imposed until January 2, 2021 on placer mining in specified rivers containing essential indigenous anadromous salmonid habitat or naturally reproducing populations of bull trout. Senate Bill 838 also directed the Governor's Office to work with state agencies and other interested parties to conduct a study and make recommendations for a revised regulatory framework for suction dredge mining.

Senate Bill 830A directs the Environmental Quality Commission to adopt rules establishing a consolidated permitting program for motorized in-stream and upland placer mining and repeals the 2016-2021 moratorium on mining using motorized equipment.