



**ORCA: Oregon Coast Alliance**  
*Protecting the Oregon Coast*

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Feb. 2, 2016

**Re: Oregon Coast Alliance Testimony on SB 1530, a bill to enact a regulatory framework for suction dredge mining in Oregon**

Dear Members of Senate Environment Committee:

Oregon Coast Alliance (ORCA) is an Oregon nonprofit corporation whose mission is protection of coastal natural resources, and working with coastal residents for livable communities.

**SB 1530**, a bill before the 2016 Legislature and currently before the Senate Environment Committee, will extend a temporary moratorium currently in place on suction-dredge mining in streams with significant salmonid habitat and other environmental sensitivities. The bill also lays out a regulatory and permitting system that will go into effect in the future.

**ORCA requests your support for this bill.** Suction-dredging is a form of recreational mining which uses a vacuum powered by a floating gas generator to suck the gravels and sediments of a riverbed into a sluice box to filter out gold flecks. This practice is very damaging to streams and streambed habitat; in addition, it creates long sediment plumes in the river.

Suction-dredging has every potential to destroy the millions of dollars Oregon has invested in salmon habitat restoration. It also destroys the ecological balance and scenic beauty of the rivers, and the economic benefits these bring. Suction-dredge permit numbers have jumped considerably between 2007-8 and 2010-11, and continue to rise as California tightens regulatory controls on the practice also.

ORCA focuses on the coast, where some of the best salmon habitat, recreation and fishing opportunities exist: on the Rogue River system (including its tributary, the Illinois) and the Chetco. Unfortunately, these rivers are also the target of suction dredgers, and the conflict is only likely to worsen.

Please support SB 1530, and amendments that would further protect our rivers by such means as, for example, a cap on total numbers of permits issued.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cameron La Follette". The signature is written in a cursive style and ends with a long horizontal flourish.

Cameron La Follette  
Executive Director