

Raszka Shelley

From: Charles Gehr <charles@flywatertravel.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 03, 2016 4:27 PM
To: Reiley Beth; SENR Exhibits
Subject: Testimony of Charles Gehr in support of Senate Bill 1530

February 4th, 2016

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

My name is Charles Gehr and I am a booking agent for fly fishing trips throughout the United States, a fly fishing guide and a resident of southern Oregon. I also volunteer for organizations that seek to protect native fish and clean water in my local watersheds.

I urge the committee to vote in favor of SB 1530.

As an avid angler and river boater ensuring clean water, healthy runs of anadromous fish and quality recreation experiences on our local rivers is of the utmost importance to me.

As a fly fishing guide and booking agent for fly fishing trips throughout the Pacific Northwest I have a vested business interest in clean rivers and healthy populations of fish as well. The outdoor recreation industry is a major economic force in our state, a much greater and more sustainable economic force than a few thousand people dredging our streams. I encourage you to protect industries, like mine, that pay for the cost of their impacts and don't extract natural resources. The measures outlined in SB 1530 will allow us to provide a framework that squarely addresses the worst of the impacts to salmon and other sensitive aquatic species and their habitat, provides the state more sufficient resources to better manage the regulator program and houses permitting under a single state agency.

It is critical to prohibit mining activity in sensitive species habitat and all streams with essential salmon habitat. We have witnessed the steady decline of salmon populations throughout Oregon for far too long. The state of Oregon is investing millions of dollars in restoring salmon habitat, yet currently is allowing individuals to damage that habitat with a \$25 mining permit. I pay more for a fishing license where I will end up putting all the wild fish back. We must prohibit mining activity in areas where the state has invested more than \$100,000 to restore salmon habitat.

It seems common sense to me to ensure that permit fees for suction dredging substantially cover the cost of an effective program administered by the DEQ to analyze, issue and enforce these regulations. SB1530 gives us time to craft a fee structure that will require miners to pay their own costs of monitoring and enforcement on an activity affecting public resources.

We are already aware of suction dredging mining's impact to water quality, which is why there are currently regulations in place pertaining to the length of their sediment plumes and why California has instituted a full moratorium on the activity. We need to develop regulations that will place protections where they are most needed, specifically in streams with impaired water quality and essential salmon habitat.

For all of these reasons I strongly support passing SB 1530.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Charles Gehr

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