

Dear Elected Official,

February 3, 2016

RE: Flywater Travel LLC's letter of support of SB 1530; a bill to enact a regulatory framework for the practice of suction dredge mining in Oregon.

I am writing to you on behalf of Flywater Travel LLC, an internationally recognized southern Oregon based fly-fishing travel company. Flywater Travel arranges world-class fly-fishing trips to more than 150 destinations around the world as well as many here in southern Oregon. Flywater Travel supports the current five-year temporary restrictions for suction dredge mining as well as SB 1530 to put in place a permanent regulatory framework that will limit suction dredge mining in Oregon. This mining practice and the laws governing it are embarrassingly outdated and present a major risk not only to sensitive trout, salmon and steelhead populations but to local economies as well.

I make my living promoting fly fishing destinations in Oregon and around the world. My company directly employs 10 full time employees in Ashland and indirectly we support a multitude of Oregon guides on more than a dozen rivers.

With the appropriate 2009 closure of suction dredge mining in California, dredging traffic went way up in southern Oregon. It is a real pity and a threat. I've experienced firsthand, while on a family raft trip on the Rogue River, the inundation of dredges on this popular section of river. On one flat in particular there were twenty within view at one time, all with motors running, and silt plumes trailing behind. It was like a slalom course to try to get through them, which posed a bit of a safety risk for the rafts. The entire scene was noisy, obtrusive, and unattractive. It also made us feel like we were encroaching on their space, when I feel that if anything an inverse emotion would be more expressive of the public will. Had I known of the scene that we encountered at the time of booking our trip, I would likely have elected to take my party of 12 elsewhere for a day of guided rafting. Heck, in hindsight we might have ended up in California! Likewise I will insist that none of our traveling anglers ever fish that section of the river, as it is a poor testament to our state and its priorities. Frankly our rivers, our residents and our visitors all deserve better.

Suction dredging is a lose-lose proposition. Its licensing fees are absurdly low (and can't even come close to covering enforcement of the practice), the income it generates for the local community is similarly low and its negative effects on the environment and other recreational activities are exceedingly high. The silting in and destabilization of critical spawning habitat cannot be contested. Likewise, it is devastating to the invertebrate aquatic insect populations that are crucial to resident and anadromous fish populations. Aesthetically it is equally demeaning to the outdoor experience.

Oregon is blessed with beautiful and productive rivers. That is why I live and operate my business here. We all know that the hay-days of wholesaling out our natural resources for reckless harvest are behind us. Let us enact some laws that illustrate that understanding and help us push forward with the critical work of creating sustainable, long-term, economic solutions that showcase the beauty and productivity of our state's wild rivers.



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Please pass SB1530 to place permanent restrictions on suction dredge mining in Oregon.

Sincerely,

Ken Morrish
Owner of Flywater Travel