



SB 644

Testimony of WaterWatch of Oregon Submitted to the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee March 30, 2017

Founded in 1985, WaterWatch is a non-profit river conservation group dedicated to the protection and restoration of natural flows in Oregon's rivers. We work to ensure that enough water is protected in Oregon's rivers to sustain fish, wildlife, recreation and other public uses of Oregon's rivers, lakes and streams. We also work for balanced water laws and policies. WaterWatch has members across Oregon who care deeply about our rivers, their inhabitants and the effects of water laws and policies on these resources.

WaterWatch opposes SB 644

SB 644 is essentially an omnibus surface mining bill that includes two short provisions related to suction dredge mining. Unlike the suction dredge mining reform legislation under SB 3, the suction dredge mining provisions in SB 644 have not had the benefit of multiple years of discussion and review among representatives from the mining industry, state agencies, recreation, scientists, and others. SB 3 is the appropriate vehicle for suction dredge reform. In addition to concerns about the suction dredge provisions of SB 644, WaterWatch opposes the land use provisions of SB 644 (and the -3 amendments), which could have devastating effects on farmlands, forests and nearby waterways. We urge the Committee to oppose SB 644.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

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