



March 30, 2017

RE: Cascadia Wildlands Testimony on SB 644

Submitted via email: senr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Chair Dembrow and Committee Members,

My name is Nick Cady. I am the legal director for Cascadia Wildlands. I live in Eugene, where our principal office is located. Cascadia Wildlands is a regional non-profit conservation organization representing 10,000 members and supporters. Cascadia Wildlands educates, agitates, and inspires a movement to protect and restore Cascadia's wild ecosystems. We envision vast old-growth forests, rivers full of wild salmon, wolves howling in the backcountry, and vibrant communities sustained by the unique landscapes of the Cascadia bioregion. Cascadia Wildlands and our members are concerned about the harmful impacts of suction-dredge mining to our state's iconic rivers and aquatic species.

Cascadia Wildlands believes that SB 644 does not adequately address suction-dredge mining, and that the proper legislative vehicle for regulating these mining practices is SB 3. SB 644 is essentially an omnibus surface mining bill that addresses suction-dredging as an afterthought. Among the many issues and shortfalls is the failure of SB 644 to address suction dredge mining in federally listed bull trout habitat, leaving the state and miners in violation of the Endangered Species Act and vulnerable to civil and criminal liability. It also fails to address riparian mining which would also lead to federal law violations, noise concerns from neighboring landowners, and fails to assemble a permitting system that could pay for enforcement.

SB 3 is the appropriate legislative vehicle for addressing suction-dredge mining and represents a multi-year effort involving all the relevant stakeholders that will permit continued suction-dredge mining while protecting sensitive areas and insulating the actors from liability under federal environmental laws.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

Nick Cady
Cascadia Wildlands