



OREGON CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB

1821 SE ANKENY ST • PORTLAND, OR 97214
PHONE (503) 238-0442 • FAX (503) 238-6281
OREGON.CHAPTER@SIERRACLUB.ORG
WWW.OREGON.SIERRACLUB.ORG

To: Members of the House Energy and Environment Committee

From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Date: May 3, 2017

RE: Senate Bill 3 A

Chair Helm and Members of the Committee: My name is Rhett Lawrence and I am the Conservation Director for the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club. On behalf of our more than 30,000 members and supporters in Oregon, I am pleased to testify on Senate Bill 3 A. As an organization with a long history working to protect water and natural resources in Oregon, we support this bill and its efforts to improve the regulation of suction dredge mining in our state. It is vitally important to have strong protections in place to safeguard our rivers and salmon habitat.

We believe SB 3 A is good compromise legislation that will protect Oregon's investment in salmon habitat restoration. It represents the result of a long and collaborative process to continue to allow some suction dredge mining while protecting the most vulnerable and sensitive habitats for salmonid species and lamprey. By extending the temporary moratorium on suction dredge mining in areas with state-designated salmon habitat and environmentally sensitive areas, this bill creates a critical regulatory and permitting framework for suction dredge mining in our state.

Even though the Sierra Club does have concerns about the overall practice of suction dredge mining, this bill will have the result that such mining will be better regulated, prohibited from sensitive salmon habitat, and allowed only in areas where it does not affect important economic and quality of life resources. While we might have preferred a permanent extension of the previous moratorium on suction dredge mining, we believe this bill is a reasonable compromise that will address most of our concerns.

For these reasons, the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club supports Senate Bill 3 A and we urge this Committee to do the same. Thank you very much for considering our comments and I'd be happy to address any questions.