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Sal Esquivel
Oregon House of Representatives
900 Court Street NE
Salem OR 97301

Re: Senate Bill Banning Suction Dredging

Dear Sal:

This letter is written in opposition to the passage of the bill prohibiting suction dredging in certain creeks and rivers in Oregon. Over the years, I have known a great number of reputable people that dredge for gold in many of our streams and rivers. According to the information that I have read, there is no harm that results in salmon, steelhead or other creatures in the rivers. Many of my friends who are now restricted from dredging have lost a recreational past time that literally thousands of people enjoy in Oregon. Robert Johnson, a CPA in Ashland, and his son have dredged for years and years. In fact, his son paid for his college education by dredging in the summertime. In addition, literally thousands of tourists in the past have come to Oregon in order to be able to suction dredge and spent a lot of money here for motels, restaurants and other necessities while here. I have read many articles written by experts on this issue, and they have indicated that there is no damage whatsoever to any of the creatures in our rivers and streams by suction dredging. In fact, according to the experts, the overall habitat in the rivers and streams that are suction dredged benefit from the dredging.

This issue is similar to the creation of monuments in the state of Oregon which totally cut off accessibility to a great deal of Oregon countryside for the use of a limited few. I once owned a cabin in the Siskiyou Monument area, which now can only be utilized by the owner of the cabin that I sold to. The only access to most all of the more beautiful monument area is only by walking, and a person would have to walk for several miles to reach the most beautiful areas. As a result, the monument areas have been effectively closed to most members of the public, resulting in a tremendous loss to all of the Oregon residents and tourists.

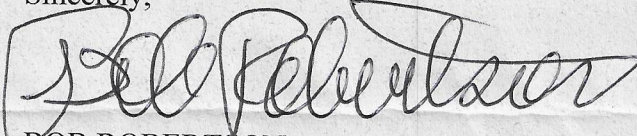
In my opinion, the present issue pending before the Oregon Legislature will have the same impact and take away an additional option for the people in the state and visitors who have enjoyed dredging and benefitted from it.

I realize that there are numbers of people who oppose suction dredging. In order to be fair to everyone, why doesn't the Legislature refer this issue to the counties on a county-by-county basis

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and let the residents of that county determine whether or not the rivers and streams in that county should be restricted from this recreational use. The Legislature does not, and should not, have the authority to continue to foreclose options that have always been enjoyed by the citizens of this state and visitors.

Sincerely,



BOB ROBERTSON

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