



Senator Dembrow
Chair, Senate Committee on
Environment and Natural Resources
900 Court St. NW, S-407
Salem, Oregon 97301

Senator Olsen
Vice-Chair, Senate Committee on
Environment and Natural Resources
900 Court St. NE, S-425
Salem, Oregon 97301

February 1, 2017

RE: Momentum River Expeditions Testimony in Support of SB 3

Dear Chair Dembrow, Vice-Chair Olsen, and members of the Committee:

I am writing to you on behalf of Momentum River Expeditions, a small southern Oregon based rafting company. Momentum River Expeditions runs world-class river trips in southern Oregon, northern California, Idaho and beyond. Some of our most popular river trips are on the Klamath, Illinois and Rogue Rivers, all which have been impacted by suction dredge mining.

Momentum River Expeditions supports SB 3 to put in place a permanent regulatory framework that will limit suction dredge mining in sensitive salmon habitat in Oregon's rivers. This practice not only impacts sensitive fish species and habitat but recreational activities, like rafting and fishing that share these rivers.

Momentum's goal is to run the best river trips in the country. We not only introduce people to the amazing beauty and wildness of our rivers but to also educate them about the history of these areas as well. Gold mining is a pertinent part of southern Oregon and northern California history and is something that we talk about with our guests. On some of our trips we point out examples of current day mining operations with the presence of suction dredges. However, we are also quick to point out the harmful effects that suction dredge mining has on our rivers and streams and which our guests experience firsthand.

With the permanent moratorium put in place in California in 2009, we saw huge numbers of miners and their dredges inundate sections of the Rogue River where we run trips daily through the summer. The presence of these dredges caused concern for safety and tarnished an otherwise great day on the river by adding the noise of the dredge motors, pollution from the engines, and a literal slalom course our rafts had to navigate.

The same section of the Rogue is also an area that has seen great improvements in fish passage and salmon habitat restoration with the removal of three significant dams. Oregon taxpayers have spent millions on restoration efforts for our iconic salmon species in our river systems. It seems a contradiction to these efforts to allow harmful hobby-mining practices that impact these fish, their habitat and productivity to continue without limits and regulations.

According to the Outdoor Industry Association's 2013 report, Oregon's outdoor industry (ie: rafting, fishing, biking, hunting, etc) provides upwards of \$12.8 billion dollars in consumer spending, \$141,000 in Oregon jobs and \$955 million in state and local taxes. Suction dredge mining is not included in this report and would be



hard pressed to even come close to those numbers. It seems as though we should be doing what we can to promote and preserve the areas in which people recreate and contribute to the overall economy sustainably so that they can be enjoyed by more than just a small demographic of hobby miners living by the rules of a severely outdated law.

Oregon is blessed with amazing rivers and is the reason why I own and operate my business here. The future of these rivers, and therefore small businesses like Momentum River Expeditions, lies in the hands of those doing what they can to help protect these places so that many users can enjoy them, responsibly into the future.

I urge you to pass SB 3 to place permanent restrictions on suction dredge mining in Oregon and implement a solid regulatory framework for the practice to protect our rivers and fish for us all.

Thank you.
Sincerely,

Pete Wallstrom
Owner & Guide, Momentum River Expeditions