

February 2, 2017

Senator Dembrow and members of the Senate Environmental and Natural Resources (SENR) Committee,

My name is Rebecca McCoun and I am writing you as a citizen of Oregon. I support Senate Bill 3, which will enact a moratorium on suction dredge mining until January 2, 2021 on mining that uses any form of motorized equipment to extract gold, silver or other precious metal from place deposits of the beds or banks of the waters of the state or from other placer deposit that result in the removal or disturbance of streamside vegetation in a manner that impacts WQ (Section 1(1)).

I have spent my career working as a natural resource professional studying the limiting factors impacting highly valued watershed ecosystem processes. The aquatic and riparian systems throughout Oregon have been greatly impacted by anthropogenic influences such as gravel extraction, channelization, flood and channel migration control structures, invasive species introduction and conversion of floodplain habitats to agricultural fields, commercial forests and urban centers.

Suction dredge mining is another human practice that contributes to the many already existing limiting factors impacting the recovery of ESA listed native fish species. Impacts of suction dredge mining include but are not limited to the following:

- Kills aquatic insects, fish eggs, and young fish
- Smothers critical spawning gravel for threatened salmon
- Degrades stream habitats
- Mobilizes legacy mercury

Millions of federal, tribal, state, local and private dollars have been spent on restoring the natural ecosystem processes that provide us with high quality water for drinking, field irrigation and livestock watering, fish and wildlife habitat and a tourist industry focused on recreating in Oregon's clean rivers and lakes.

I am strongly in favor of protecting Oregon rivers and using our natural resources responsibly and sustainably so that everyone now and into the future can utilize and benefit from Oregon's life giving water resources. The short-term gain of suction dredge mining is not worth the long term consequences. Please pass Senate Bill 3.

Thank you.

Rebecca McCoun
Lafayette, Oregon