



## OREGON CHAPTER SIERRA CLUB

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To: Members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee

From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Date: February 6, 2017

RE: Senate Bill 3

Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee: On behalf of the more than 30,000 members and supporters of the Sierra Club in Oregon, I am pleased to provide this written testimony on Senate Bill 3. 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 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, bull trout, and lamprey. By extending the temporary moratorium on suction dredge mining in areas with state-designated salmon habitat and environmentally sensitive areas, this bill begins the process for creating a regulatory and permitting framework for suction dredge mining in the future.

Even though the Sierra Club does have concerns about the overall practice of suction dredge mining, it is our hope that over the next few years state agencies can get a better sense of how to permit these activities to protect salmon habitat and the aquatic environment. We also believe that extending the moratorium to upland mining through 2019 will give DOGAMI the time it needs to prepare suitable permitting protocols for those activities.

For these reasons, the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club supports Senate Bill 3 and we urge this Committee to do the same. While we might have preferred a permanent extension of the moratorium, we believe the process that will result from this bill to strengthen the regulation of suction dredge mining is a reasonable solution in the meantime. Thank you very much for considering our comments and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of further assistance to the Committee.