



## 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

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To: Members of the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

From: Rhett Lawrence, Oregon Chapter Sierra Club

Date: February 21, 2017

RE: House Bill 2106

Chair Clem 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 House Bill 2106. As an organization with a long history working to protect water and natural resources in Oregon, we support efforts to improve the regulation of suction dredge mining in our state, but we do not believe this bill is the appropriate way to do so. HB 2106 simply does not go far enough to protect clean water and native fish.

It is vitally important to have strong protections in place to safeguard our rivers and salmon habitat. But unlike the suction dredge mining reform legislation under consideration in the Senate (SB 3), the suction dredge mining provisions in HB 2106 have not had the benefit of multiple years of discussion and review among representatives from the mining industry, state agencies, recreation, scientists, and others. Additionally, the provisions of HB 2106 are much more narrow in scope and significantly less protective of clean water, native fish, and sensitive habitats than Senate Bill 3.

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, SB 3 begins the process for creating a regulatory and permitting framework for suction dredge mining in the future.

For these reasons, the Oregon Chapter of the Sierra Club cannot support House Bill 2106 at this time. We believe Senate Bill 3 is the better route forward and we urge this Committee not to take action on HB 2106. 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.