

I am writing you to convey my support for S.B.471. I am the Oregon Area Coordinator for Amnesty International USA have been working on the conflict-free minerals issue for the last three years. In 2017 Representative Jennifer Williamson introduced a House bill at my request. Since that time, our small coalition has not missed a Legislative Day in order to explain and advance the hope for a conflict-free mineral bill in Oregon.

The issue is really quite simple. What S.B.471 does is ask the question of where the minerals in our electronic devices come from. That is it. It does not require the state purchasing agents to buy all conflict-free products, merely ask the question. Economics are a prime concern to us and we do want the state make wise fiscal decisions.

The minerals we are addressing are tin, tantalum and tungsten and gold(3T's+G). The minerals are found in our electronic devices like our cell phones and computers. A vast quantity of these minerals are found in the Democratic Republic of Congo(DRC). Since World War II, more people have died in the DRC than any other conflict. Over 5.4 million people have perished in armed conflict. This brutal cycle must end and using conflict-free minerals is a small avenue to provide legitimacy to a country desperately in need of infrastructure.

Since the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Protection Act of 2010, including section 1502, the Conflict Mineral Act, measurable progress has evolved. Prior to 2010 illegal militias controlled these mines and provided revenue to purchase weapons and terrorize citizens. Rape and child soldiers are common practices in this war torn region. Dodd-Frank is making a difference. In 2016, a study found that 79% of the 3T mines surveyed in the DRC are now conflict free. Oregon should be a part of conflict-free mineral sourcing.

Section 1502 of the Dodd-Frank developed the mechanism for reporting the sources of the 3T+G minerals. Manufacturers are already reporting to companies where their minerals are coming from. We want the same reports sent to the state. Nor do we want a boycott. We want S.B.471 to be business friendly. Reports from the Enough Project state that the price of these minerals was reduced once they came from conflict-free mines. It is truly a win-win situation.

The problems in the DRC are vast and the people of Oregon are not responsible for solving all their issues. Their long overdue December presidential election is still under scrutiny. Ebola is breaking out in the eastern Kiva provinces where many of these 3T+G minerals are found. The utilization of conflict-free minerals will not solve all the problems in the DRC, but it is a critical step in establishing legitimacy and structure in their economy.

The people of Oregon care about what we purchase. We do not want to perpetuate instability and violence. We want to know our purchases are made with clean components. I urge you to support SB471 in 2019.

Thank you for your time and consideration and the sacrifices on this critical issue.

Respectfully;
Marty Fromer
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