



To: Members of the Senate Environment and Natural Resources Committee  
From: Lori Ann Burd, Center for Biological Diversity  
Date: March 29, 2017  
**RE: Senate Bill 644- OPPOSE**

Submitted via [senr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:senr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov)

Dear Honorable Chair Dembrow and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity (Center) we submit this written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 644. Instead the Center urges the committee to support Senate Bill 3-8, which provides a compromise to protect sensitive fisheries for wildlife, commercial and sport fishermen, and recreational users while allowing suction dredge mining in areas where it would have less impact on environmentally sensitive resources.

The Center is a national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 1.2 million members and online activists nationwide, including throughout Oregon. The Center is dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places and has worked to protect fish and wildlife by seeking greater protection for water quality and wildlife habitat by minimizing the threats from suction dredge mining.

SB 644/HB 2106 is an omnibus surface mining bill that includes provisions related to suction dredge mining that would undercut the years of scientific input and review among representatives from state agencies, fishermen, recreational users, scientists, conservation groups, and the mining industry. SB 644/HB 2106 would continue to allow federal mining claimants to engage in damaging mining activities in areas that are designated as essential for the reproduction of salmon, steelhead, and other sensitive fish species. It would also encourage mining pollution in waterways that already suffer from high levels of pollutants generated by mining activities.

Based on the long legislative history of SB 3-8, the collaborative processes used to refine it over multiple legislative sessions, and the commitment of Senator Bates to developing a long-term regulatory approach to reform suction dredge mining, we believe that SB 3-8 is the appropriate legislative vehicle to reform suction dredge mining. SB 3-8 is a compromise bill that allows mining to occur, but still recognizes the significant risks it poses to the health of streams and native fish and creates common sense restrictions necessary to minimize impacts on important state resources.

Thank you for your consideration,

Lori Ann Burd  
Environmental Health Program Director  
971-717-6405  
[laburd@biologicaldiversity.org](mailto:laburd@biologicaldiversity.org)