



ORCA: Oregon Coast Alliance
Protecting the Oregon Coast

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March 29, 2017

Oregon Legislature
Oregon State Capitol
Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 644

Via email: senr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Dear Chair Dembrow and Members of the Committee,

Oregon Coast Alliance (ORCA) is an Oregon nonprofit whose mission is to protect coastal natural resources and aid in community livability. We write you today concerning SB 644.

ORCA **opposes** SB 644 for the following reasons:

1. Suction dredge mining should not be covered in this bill (Sections 17-18). There is a separate omnibus bill, SB 3 -8, which is the working vehicle for creating a regulatory framework to deal with suction-dredge mining in Oregon. All legislative work on suction-dredge mining should be done through this comprehensive bill.
2. ORCA strongly opposes politicizing and paralyzing the DOGAMI governing board (Section 1) by making its members representatives of various special interests, such as the aggregate industry and oil, gas and precious metals mining industries. This is contrary to DOGAMI's function of providing earth science information, and also to its regulatory functions of mining activities.
3. ORCA strongly opposes the declaratory statement (Section 3) that mining on land zoned for farm or forest use is "appropriate and beneficial." In fact mining, though temporarily beneficial to the economy, is rarely if ever appropriate, and certainly not beneficial, to surrounding land uses such as farm and forestry. For example, chromite sands strip mining in forestland in Coos County a few years ago left a more than 25-acre barren patch of ground, even with "reclamation," that grows nothing except a slight amount of non-native grass.

4. Mining should never be allowed as an outright use on Exclusive Farm Use land, in eastern Oregon or elsewhere. It is not a farm use, and is destructive of farming operations. Mining should only be a Conditional Use, as it currently is, so that decision-makers can apply the relevant land use standards to determine whether mining should occur in a particular location or not. The same considerations apply to land zoned for forest activities. Allowing mining as an outright use in eastern Oregon would create a terrible precedent for the rest of the state. It would begin the process of dismantling the integrity of Goals 3 and 4 of the land use system, and farm and forest operations, for special mining interests.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. Please place this testimony into the record for this measure.

Sincerely,

/s/ Cameron La Follette

Cameron La Follette
Executive Director