



# PRESS RELEASE

## OREGON HOUSE DEMOCRATS

---

For Immediate Release  
May 31, 2017

For More Information, Contact:  
Scott Moore: 503-986-1904

### **Oregon House Sends Waterway Protection Bill to Governor** *Senate Bill 3 regulates the practice of suction dredge mining*

SALEM – Oregon’s rivers and streams will soon have additional protections following the passage of [Senate Bill 3](#) by the Oregon House of Representatives today. The legislation strikes a balance between the interests of miners and the conservation of vital native fish habitat.

SB 3 ends the moratorium on motorized in-stream placer mining, also known as suction dredge mining. It prohibits the practice on rivers and streams containing essential salmonid species migration habitat.

This legislation is the culmination of an effort that began years ago by a group of individuals concerned about the long-term health and sustainability of Oregon’s rivers and streams. Late Sen. Alan Bates (D-Medford) was among that group of individuals.

“I’m pretty sure Doc Bates would be proud of SB 3,” said Rep. Pam Marsh (D-Ashland) who was a sponsor of the bill and carried it on the House floor. “Not because it will accomplish everything he set out to do. Rather, because the bill focuses in on the core issues of fish and habitat protection – and even more importantly, because it is evidence of our intent to preserve Oregon’s wild areas and biological legacy for the next generation. Alan was passionate about that.”

The bill clearly defines when and where the practice is allowed and sets out restrictions. The practice is allowed:

- Between the hours of 8 a.m. and 8 p.m., or sunset, within 1,000 feet of a residence or campground;
- The suction hose being used is four inches in diameter or smaller;
- And the mining is being done in a manner that is not harmful to freshwater mollusks, essential fish habitat or habitat necessary for recovery and conservation of lamprey

“This bill is a good example of how we can work together, find balance and ensure that we are good stewards of our natural resources,” said Rep. Ken Helm (D-Beaverton). “This does not end the practice of dredge mining, it just makes sure that it is happening in a way that does not disproportionately impact our streams and rivers.”

The bill, which passed the House 38-20, now goes to Governor Kate Brown for her signature.

###