

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary of the Interior
1849 C St., NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

June 9, 2010

Dear Secretaries Salazar and Vilsack:

As Oregon state officials, we would like to respectfully add our names to those from our Federal delegation who have already requested an immediate withdrawal of the Southern Oregon Siskiyou Wild Rivers area from the Mining Law of 1872, under the authority granted to the Secretary of the Interior in Section 204 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. Like Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, Representative Peter DeFazio, and Governor Ted Kulongoski, we believe that this strong measure is necessary to ensure Oregon's Siskiyou Wild Rivers are permanently protected from the significant threats posed by mining under the antiquated 1872 Mining Law.

Since 2001, when a Clinton administration mining moratorium for the region was reversed, there have been over 800 new claims filed in the Siskiyou Wild Rivers region. Today we anticipate an additional rise in claims due to the 2009 suction dredge mining ban throughout the state of California. This ban has prompted California-based mining interests to take an aggressive and therefore troublesome interest in the Siskiyou Wild Rivers area.

Impacts of mining are widespread in these pristine Oregon watersheds; toxic runoff, leaching, and erosion from mines result in poor water quality for downstream wildlife and human communities. Mining often includes cutting of old-growth, bulldozers in and near streams, suction dredge machines in salmon spawning habitat and irresponsible road building for access. The disturbance of streambeds eliminates spawning habitat for sensitive salmon. Mining creates unappealing scars on the landscape that reduces property values and the region's appeal, and therefore affects our business community.

The Siskiyou Wild Rivers area attracts people from around the world who come to view our rare botanical wonders, fish, raft, hike, and otherwise enjoy this area. A recent economic report concluded that recreation on the Rogue River alone generated more than \$30 million in 2007. Additionally, a separate report concluded that west coast residents enjoy more than \$1.5 billion in economic benefit annually from the Rogue River salmon and steelhead runs.

Until Congress reforms the 1872 Mining Law, the Siskiyou Wild Rivers will be at risk. Based on its economic importance to recreation, tourism, fish, and wildlife, we urge you to take this action to safeguard Oregon's Siskiyou Wild Rivers area. These beautiful lands deserve to be protected so they can continue to provide benefits to our community. Thank you for your consideration and ongoing support of our public lands. We look forward to your work in the Siskiyou Wild Rivers region.

Sincerely,

Representative Jules Bailey, Portland
Representative Phil Barnhart, Eugene
Representative Brent Barton, Clackamas
Senator Alan Bates, Ashland
Senator Suzanne Bonamici, Beaverton
Representative Peter Buckley, Ashland
Representative Ben Cannon, Chair, House
Environment & Water Committee, Portland
Representative Brian Clem, Salem
Senator Richard Devlin, Tualatin

Senator Jackie Dingfelder, Chair, Senate
Environment Committee, Portland
Representative Chris Garrett, Lake Oswego
Representative Mary Nolan, Portland
Representative Tobias Read, Beaverton
Representative Chuck Riley, Hillsboro
Senator Diane Rosenbaum, Portland
Senator Martha Schrader, Canby
Representative Jefferson Smith, Portland
Representative Carolyn Tomei, Milwaukie

Cc: Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Jeff Merkley
Congressman Peter DeFazio
Congressman Earl Blumenauer
Governor Ted Kulongoski
Robert Bonnie, Senior Advisor to the Secretary, USDA
Harris Sherman, Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment, USDA –
Thomas Tidwell, Chief, US Forest Service
Amy Salzman, Associate Director, Policy Outreach, CEQ
Sylvia Baca, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land & Minerals Management
Ned Farquhar, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Land & Minerals Management
Mike Pool, Deputy Director, Bureau of Land Management