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To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Fri, Jun 8, 2007 7:34 AM
Subject: comment letter-suction dredge mining

State Water Resources Control Board
Division of Water Quality
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9 June 2007

Greetings,

I am writing today to offer information about suction dredge mining that I hope will be used in the decision making process concerning suction dredge mining.

I have had the opportunity to both observe this type of mining and also participate in the last few years. Any effect of suction dredge mining that is detectable is localized and temporary. The river/stream as a whole is not effected. Modern-day suction dredge mining is completely different than mining activities that may have occurred in the distant past. These personal observations are born out by published studies on the matter. Here are 3 examples out of many that could be referenced:

1. The California Department of Fish and Game (1997) described typical dredging activities as follows' "An individual suction dredge operation affects a relatively small portion of a stream or river
2. "Six small dredges (<6 inch dredge nozzle) on a 1.2 mile (2 km) stretch had no additive effect (Harvey, B.C., 1986). Water quality was typically temporally and spatially restricted to the time and immediate vicinity of the dredge (North, P.A., 1993).
3. "Effects from elevated levels of turbidity and suspended sediment normally associated with suction dredging as regulated in the past in California appear to be less than significant with regard to impacts to fish and other river resources because of the level of turbidity created and the short distance downstream of a suction dredge where turbidity levels return to normal" (CDFG, 1997).

As you can see this sampling of the data shows that suction dredge mining is a low impact activity and does not need additional restrictions placed on it.

In addition to this information I ask that you give consideration to the positive aspects of suction dredge mining. As a by-product of the process a suction dredge operator takes both mercury and lead out of the waterway. In so doing the miner is helping to clean up the environment.

Thank you in advance for considering my comments.

Sincerely,

Ken Coulson

10166 Covert Ave.

6/12/07 Workshop
Suction Dredge Mining
Deadline: 6/22/07 Noon

