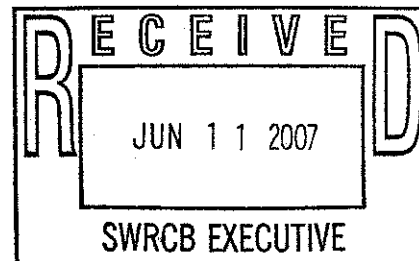


6/12/07 Workshop
Suction Dredge Mining
Deadline: 6/22/07 Noon

From: "Wes Hawkins" <whawkins-auhunter@earthlink.net>
To: <commentletters@waterboards.ca.gov>
Date: Mon, Jun 11, 2007 10:55 PM
Subject: Comment letter-Suction dredge mining



To: Song Her

My name is Wes Hawkins and I have been mining in this state for the last 12 years. My comments here concern AB 1032. I am totally against passage of this bill. This is another attempt by the Dept of Fish and Game to eliminate suction dredge mining in the state of California. This bill ignores the fact that mining is a right, not a privilege, and regulating the dredger out of the water amounts to taking away our use of public lands. Dredgers are already over regulated in this state by holding to specific times of the year we can dredge in rivers and streams. We are not allowed to be in the rivers now during any fish spawning periods.

Dredging has also been shown in the past to be beneficial to fish populations by creating holes in the river gravels that create deeper water. This deeper water is cooler and because of this it draws fish to these spots. Dredging also loosens river gravels and creates food sources, it creates spawning beds from the tailings and also oxygenates the water. Any discharge sediment settles back to the bottom of the river in less than 75 to 100 feet, this is a lot less of a disturbance than a typical winter storm that turns the rivers into a mud flow for miles and miles, this usually occurring during the spawning seasons. After a typical winter season I challenge anyone to go to a known dredged river and find anyplace that was dredged. I wish I could that way I would know where not to put in my dredge. Dredging also removes heavy metals from the river and stream system. Metals like lead, iron and Mercury.

It has been proven in past litigation that dredging has no detrimental effect on fish population or water quality, which is why Fish and Game is taking this approach to regulate dredgers out of the water.

Bill AB 1032 is nothing more than an attempt to skirt the constitutional right of due process by handing the policy making process over to a committee of Fish and Game people that will not have to account to the people for their decisions.

These are just some of the reasons I am against passage of AB-1032.

Regards: Wes Hawkins