



# City of Gold Beach

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Friday, May 20, 2016

SENT VIA EMAIL & USPS

Robert MacWhorter, Forest Supervisor  
% Shannon Downey  
Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest  
3040 Biddle Rd,  
Medford, OR 97504

**RE: SW Oregon Mineral Withdrawal**

Dear Mr. MacWhorter:

Please accept this letter as a placeholder comment in favor of SW Oregon Mineral Withdrawal legislation. The Gold Beach City Council, at the May 9<sup>th</sup> Council meeting, voted to send a letter supporting the mining withdrawal proposal as well as draft a resolution in support of the withdrawal. The resolution will be ratified at the June 13<sup>th</sup> Council meeting. Even though the comment period will be officially closed at that time, I will forward a copy of the resolution once signed.

The Red Flat mining proposal--that was the genesis of this proposed withdrawal legislation--is located in close proximity to the City of Gold Beach. In the past our area has been heavily dependent on a natural resources extraction economy that was strongly encouraged by the USFS and other federal agencies. Most of that extraction was in the form of timber, but Curry County does have a long history of mineral extraction as well—mostly aggregate, though, not hazardous mining like nickel mining.

In the past 20 years, and specifically in the past 10, our area has worked really hard to make lemonade from the lemons we were handed in the early '90s (no harvesting of a *renewable* resource on federal lands that make up 75% of our county). But the timber discussion is a horse beaten so dead there isn't enough left for glue--so no point in going there. It is what it is, and we will never go back to harvesting and replanting, so we have tried to move on. We are making lemonade economically by working on building a successful tourism economy that embraces the "wild" in the wilderness and wild rivers that surround us.

Nickel mining—anywhere—but specifically HERE would be catastrophic to that tourism economy, and, in my opinion, kind of a slap in our faces. We are no longer permitted to

*The City of Gold Beach is dedicated to enhancing quality of life, while promoting the health, safety, and welfare of our citizens, businesses, and visitors in the most fiscally responsible manner. In doing this, the City will respect the past, respond to current concerns, and plan for the future, while maintaining environmental sensitivity in our beach oriented community.*





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harvest and replant trees--a renewable natural resource: but now federal agencies may allow devastating extraction of a non-renewable source metal. Those extraction activities scar and pollute the surrounding areas and bring ZERO income to the locals that are affected by the devastation. How does that comport with the past 25 years of rhetoric that logging destroys the environment and threatens fish habitat? Roads aren't even being maintained in the national forest surrounding Gold Beach because that maintenance may adversely impact habitat. But strip mining is a possibility?

*The mining company isn't even an American company.* If you want to say there is controversy surrounding this issue: **there it is**—a foreign company strip mining a one-of-a-kind wilderness area, devastating salmon habitat, devastating watersheds of federally designated wild rivers, and destroying a fragile tourism economy in one of the most economically devastated counties in the entire west. All based on some obscure law over 100 years old? THAT is the controversy.

We are a first world country. We know what strip mining does to the environment and to communities surrounding it. The fact that we have to even say: STOP. PLEASE. is shameful in 2016.

But that is what we are saying: STOP PLEASE. Help us preserve our fragile tourism economy. Help us to preserve the wild areas that make us America's Wild Rivers Coast. Withdraw these areas from consideration for mineral extraction. Not just for 5 years. Not even for 20. Withdraw them permanently.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Jodi Fritts

City Administrator

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