

**CURRY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM ROUTING SLIP (ARS)  
PART I – SUBMITTING DEPARTMENT: RETURN TO [BOC\\_OFFICE@CO.CURRY.OR.US](mailto:BOC_OFFICE@CO.CURRY.OR.US)**

**AGENDA ITEM TITLE:** **CURRY SUPPORT FOR EXPANSION OF THE SMITH RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION AREA – WATERSHED IN CURRY COUNTY - COMMISSIONER BOICE**

**TIMELY FILED** Yes  No

**AGENDA DATE:** February 16, 2022 **DEPARTMENT:**

**Board of Commissioners**

1. Financial Stability  2. Economic Development  3. Quality of Life   
4. Public Trust  5. Infrastructure

**TIME NEEDED:** 10 Minutes

**RECOMMENDED AGENDA CATEGORY**

**ACTION ITEM**

**MEMO ATTACHED** Yes  No

**CONTACT PERSON:** [COMMISSIONER BOICE](#) **TODAY'S DATE:** February 12, 2022

**BRIEF BACKGROUND:**

[Oregon State Representative David Brock Smith and I both support this legislation. We each wrote a letter to Senator Merkley both in 2019 and again last November. In the interest of protecting our critical watersheds, this is also somewhat related to the Southwest Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protection Act – the Curry County Board of Commissioners Supported 12-8-21 – \(attached\)](#)

[I'm asking my CCC Board to approve my following letter with any refinements, logo, updates, etc. as needed.](#)

[With expected approval, we would then send it to U.S. Senators Merkley and Wyden along with the U.S. Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee Chair and Vice Chair Manchin and Barrasso. Finally, to the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors.](#)

[I can offer to the Board my reasons I believe this to be good legislation and also answer any questions during our meeting on 2-16-22.](#)



November 2, 2021

Chairman Joe Manchin III  
Ranking Member John Barrasso  
304 Dirksen Senate Building  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: SUPPORT FOR EXPANSION OF THE SMITH RIVER NATIONAL RECREATION  
AREA IN CURRY COUNTY

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member John Barrasso:

I am writing to express strong support for Senator Merkley's legislation to expand the beautiful Smith River Watershed that originates in Southwest Oregon.

This segment of the Kalmiopsis Wilderness and Smith River head waters is a national treasure and a valuable asset to our coastal communities. It is a stronghold in providing salmon and steelhead for commercial and sport fisheries and too as drinking water for our downstream residents. I am pleased to know that this legislation provides a permanent ban on new mining claims and that there is no private land involved.

Thank you for your efforts to expand the Smith River National Recreation Area. It is an excellent investment in the health of our region.

Sincerely,

***Court Boice, Curry County Oregon Commissioner***

541.247.3229 541.661.6150 94235 Moore St. Suite 122 Gold Beach, Or 97444

[boicec@co.curry.or.us](mailto:boicec@co.curry.or.us)

*Rare to the planet! Combining the Greatest Ocean, Biggest Trees, Most Rugged Mountains, Most Pristine Rivers, and the Wildest Fish...!*



**Curry County  
Board of Commissioners**

John Herzog, *Chair*  
Christopher Paasch, *Vice Chair*  
Court Boice, *Commissioner*

94235 Moore Street/Suite #122  
Gold Beach, OR 97444  
541-247-3296, 541-247-2718 Fax  
800-243-1996 www.co.curry.or.us

December 8, 2021

Re: Curry County Board of Commissioners Support for the Southwestern Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protection Act (H.R. 980)

Dear Senator Wyden, Senator Merkley, and Congressman DeFazio,

At our Dec. 1, 2021, meeting, the Curry County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to express strong support for the Southwestern Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protection Act. This Act will help safeguard the headwaters of several of our local wild rivers and salmon streams from the threat of nickel strip mining by making the 2016 Southwestern Oregon Mineral Withdrawal permanent.

Headwaters to be protected include those of both the Wild & Scenic Illinois River, which flows into our nationally renowned Wild & Scenic Rogue River, and also the Wild & Scenic North Fork Smith in Oregon, which ultimately flows down through Redwood National Park south of our state line. The headwaters of Hunter Creek and Pistol River, two locally beloved salmon streams, are also included. Protecting the unique values of these watersheds is a high priority for us and for our citizens.

We in Curry County are very proud of our outstanding Wild and Scenic rivers and salmon streams that flow from the rugged mountains into the Pacific Ocean. The rivers of our "Wild Rivers Coast" region are national treasures cherished for their clear emerald-tinted water, world-class fisheries, and many outstanding opportunities for recreation. They are also important to our local South Coast economy, with sport fisheries alone drawing tens of thousands of anglers and accounting for millions of dollars each year. The rivers also provide pure drinking water for our residents and are a big part of our rural way of life. For all these reasons, our City of Gold Beach, plus many local tourism-oriented businesses, local civic and conservations organizations, and concerned residents and anglers have supported protecting the headwaters of our rivers from the irrevocable risks associated with strip mining. Curry County wants a clean water economy into the future.

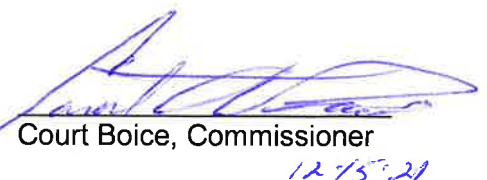
The 2016 temporary withdrawal was intended to give Congress time to pass this law and has already been in effect for five years. We are aware that the Southwestern Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protection Act has been introduced in every session since 2015 but has not yet passed. We strongly urge you to work together with your colleagues in Washington D.C. to do all that you can to move this legislation across the finish line in a timely manner to help ensure the conservation of Curry County's wild rivers, salmon, and clean water into the future.

Thank You.

Curry County Board of Commissioners

  
John Herzog, Chair

  
Christopher S Paasch, Vice Chair

  
Court Boice, Commissioner  
12/15/21