

10,000 Years Institute ♦ Chehalis River Basin Land Trust ♦ Cherry Point Aquatic Reserve CSC ♦ Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team ♦ FOGH (Friends of Grays Harbor) ♦ Friends of the San Juans ♦ Grays Harbor Audubon Society ♦ Oceana ♦ Orca Behavior Institute ♦ Orca Network ♦ RE Sources ♦ Sierra Club South Sound ♦ Spokane Riverkeeper ♦ Surfrider Foundation ♦ The Center for Biological Diversity ♦ The Lands Council ♦ The Nature Conservancy ♦ The Nature Conservancy in Washington ♦ Twin Harbors Waterkeeper ♦ WashAway No More ♦ Whale Scout ♦ Whidbey Environmental Action Network ♦ Wild Salmon Center

Local, coastal and statewide organizations support **SB 5145** to prevent seabed mining

Dear Governor Inslee and Washington State Legislators:

We write to urge your support and work to pass SB 5145 (2021-2022) concerning the prevention of seabed mining of hard minerals in Washington's marine waters.

Coastal communities rely on the ocean to sustain jobs, sense of place, and spiritual practice. Seabed mining would harm these communities, impact tribal sovereign rights including but not limited to treaty fish and shellfish, and disrupt fishing and shellfish opportunities for all. This activity would jeopardize the health of important wildlife on or near the seafloor, including commercially important species like groundfish, halibut, and Dungeness crab.

With each new research dive to the seafloor, scientists discover amazing wildlife and learn more about the role the deep-sea plays in the health of our planet. With each new analysis of the potential harm seabed mining may bring, more alarm bells ring. In addition to acute damage to the seafloor, mining creates toxic sediment plumes, noise, light, and thermal pollution that disrupt marine communities, and other unpredictable impacts to the midwater ecosystem. This jeopardizes the health of other wildlife in the marine environment such as salmon and steelhead, tuna, billfish, forage fish, and marine mammals, including the endangered Southern Resident Killer Whales.

Interest in mining mineral rich black sands, known to harbor iron, titanium and other minerals, has existed since at least the late 1800s along the Washington coast from Cape Flattery to the Columbia River. Without precautionary action via SB 5145, lease applications from industry could appear.

Oregon passed a law in 1991 banning seabed mining in its state waters. We believe Washington should do the same. It's too risky to have this damaging practice potentially open to new leases. Given the present effects of rising ocean temperatures and acidification, nearshore marine waters and coastal communities along the Pacific do not need another threat. Please do all you can to ensure passage of SB 5145 to protect our shared coastal waters.

Thank you for your time and attention to this issue.

Sincerely,

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