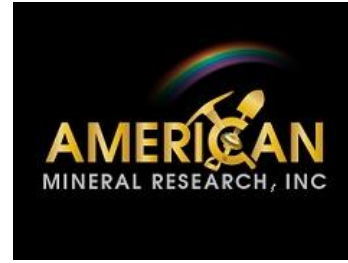


November 6, 2021



American Mineral Research

Additional Testimony to provide the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands

www.AmericanMineralResearch.com

Hearing Date: November 9, 2021

Dear honorable committee and subcommittee chairs, ranking members, and representatives,

My name is Jay Meredith and I'm the CFO and Board Chairman of the young private company American Mineral Research. I thank you from the bottom of my heart for considering and reading these few pages of additional testimony, because our home County, Josephine County Oregon, has been **facing some dire circumstances in the last 10 years due largely to congressional acts affecting our federally managed lands in Josephine County and SW Oregon**. And three very harmful and costly Federal Acts are pending before congress as we speak today, threatening our community safety and region's economic future even more than the tough circumstances we're already facing today.

Since the November 9th hearing is specific to H.R. 980, the SW Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protection Act, let me say upfront here please **go to YouTube, search for American Mineral Research, and find the 21-minute mini-documentary we filmed and placed on YouTube on June 3, 2021**. This Act is present in no less than three major federal bills pending in congress today, and there is a fourth bill pending that would lock up over 3 million additional acres of resource land throughout Oregon. Because Oregon congressman DeFazio and Oregon Senators Wyden and Merkley are not telling you the truth of what most Oregonians that actually live in these areas really think of these proposals and what the nature of these lands really is, please see this short video for the truth and also for an amazing green energy mineral opportunity we have in SW Oregon.

You may have heard claims from Rep. DeFazio and Senator Wyden that thousands and thousands of people have testified in favor of these proposals. Well if this is true, the vast majority of this testimony is not from our local area and from the local areas actually affected by these proposed federal mineral withdrawals and wildland expansions.

As just one of many examples, in an advisory question placed on the May 2016 Josephine County ballot, **69% of the voters said no** when asked, “Should Congress designate 63 additional miles of the Rogue River as a Wild & Scenic River?” Wyden and DeFazio will boast about how many letters of support they may have received on some of these bills, but this is a political campaign by special interest environmental groups and not the voice of the people that actually live in the areas that would be affected.

Congress, and even USGS, doesn't understand the critical minerals and billions, perhaps trillions, of minerals that would be lost forever from our local economic future in these federal bills and don't understand these proposed Acts are also literally stealing from our current and future law enforcement revenues at the local level. **These mineral withdrawals and wildland expansions are in essence very much like an eminent domain “taking” from our local citizens, except WITHOUT any compensation for these takings.** These lands are not owned by the federal government, they are merely managed by the federal government. We will fight these illegal takings vigorously, in court if necessary. Everyone we've talked to locally agrees if these Acts move forward, we should be due compensation for local law enforcement and even our County Sheriff says we should pursue compensation. Our local safety and economic future are at stake with these various federal bills, and please continue reading to understand why.

You see, our County, Josephine County, Oregon, is a very large rural County in SW Oregon and close to two-thirds of the land by acreage in our county is federally managed land. As you might imagine, what happens on this huge swath of federally managed land has a massive economic impact on our local communities. By both the spirit and letter of the law, use of public lands in Oregon is supposed to “contribute to the economic stability of local communities and industries” as stated in the congressional O&C Act for example.

Josephine County and its law enforcement and justice systems were in a severe financial crisis between 2012 and 2017 due to the failure of congress to honor previous federal timber-related funding agreements. We had to lay off nearly half of our local justice system professionals in 2012 and are still trying to recover today.

Between 2012 and 2017, the rural parts of Josephine County outside our one main incorporated City of Grants Pass, had less law enforcement officers per capita than many third world countries. Many people were tragically hurt by not having access to law enforcement services, our juvenile justice shelter/detention building was mothballed for almost 6 years and even just a few weeks ago some our local officials asked for help from the national guard to help combat the cartels that have moved into our area to grow cannabis, illegally in many cases. Over the last 10 years I have personally sacrificed countless hours serving in local nonprofit organizations and political action committees dedicated to getting our local law enforcement and justice programs back on their feet.

My relatively young company, American Mineral Research, thanks to significant mineral discoveries and many years of hard work by our Founder Michael Cope, owns several mineral development projects in Josephine County, Oregon, and to my knowledge is the only company that has been doing critical mineral research in our immediate region of SW Oregon. While we're a young company by traditional business terms, we're backed by our Founder's nearly three decades of mineral research in Josephine County and SW Oregon. We also have in our company's mission and vision statements to help our local governments be successful and increase tourism in the area through our activities.

As a private company, much of our data remains private. But we have been recognized by former state geologists with DOGAMI (our state geology department), for the discovery of high levels of native tellurium in certain areas of Josephine County and SW Oregon. Tellurium, designated a critical mineral by the Dept of Interior due to its importance in manufacturing high efficiency thin film solar panels, is the rarest element on the US critical mineral list. And based on our preliminary research, certain areas of our County and region have significant Tellurium deposits that go together with other economically viable mineral deposits. We call Tellurium a green energy material, and if we collectively want to consider a greener energy future and continue to manufacture certain technologies to enhance our future, we need the critical minerals present in Josephine County and SW Oregon.

In layman's terms, we believe two or three small holes in the ground in Josephine County may have the potential to increase our domestic production of Tellurium by 5% or more, and that's just the beginning. Experts in academia tell us that all the solar companies that use Tellurium in their manufacturing processes are concerned about the future supply of Tellurium.

We've collaborated with Oregon State University, DOGAMI, USGS, one of the best private modern mineral exploration firms in the world, and even this year attended a national workshop discussing the Resilient Supply of Critical Minerals organized by the Missouri University of Science and Technology. Back in 2014 we held what we called the Southern Oregon Minerals Summit and brought in a worldwide expert and metals PhD to be a keynote speaker regarding Tellurium and to discuss mineral development opportunities in SW Oregon. He was amazed that there is a modern, developed part of the United States where nobody other than a small private organization has done any significant modern mineral research to know what's available in the area.

This local area was even the subject of what we believe was potentially the largest federal mineral examination in the early 1900s, the conclusion of which they said the lands are misclassified and they should be classified as mineral lands. They remain misclassified even today.

Not even USGS understands our local mineralogy, due mostly to the lack of budget in DOGAMI, our state geology department. We've tried to share some of our data with

USGS, but USGS told us they cannot accept any data unless it goes through our state geology department. And Oregon has been cutting back on the budget of our state geology department for years. According to one of the few state geologists left in the department that we spoke to earlier this year, as of the current fiscal year the state geology department has defunded all staff positions that had the capability to do field mineral assessment work. And this is a trend that has been going on for years, as evidenced by when they closed our local DOGAMI office almost 10 years ago. Imagine, if you will, closing the geology office in the most mineral rich part of Oregon while only staffing the department out of an urban city area. Other than hosting a significant library of mineral projects that happened many decades ago before modern mineral research methods were employed, we don't have a geology department in Oregon anymore.

We've designed an environmentally friendly, very small-scale mineral development approach based on the unique geology of our area. We're modernizing our local geology information. We're seeking to create many jobs, be the first critical mineral supplier in our region, directly contribute mineral royalty revenues to our local government to help assist our local law enforcement programs, and in time use our unique geology to enhance tourism opportunities. As a side note, in the fall of last year I took my two boys, ages 8 and 12, to a recreational gold mining camp down in northern California. We went fishing, swimming, gold mining, and had one of the best vacations we've ever had. So yes, mineral development opportunities can even enhance tourism in our future as well as more importantly supply our country with domestic sources of green energy and other critical minerals we need for solar panels, electric cars, our country's defense manufacturing industry, and so much more.

But right as we're preparing to launch our campaign to show Oregon how modern environmentally friendly and small-scale mineral development activities can peacefully coexist with all other types of recreational activities as well as the protection of our regional watersheds, three additional federal proposals are trying to cut off SW Oregon at the knees. Billions, perhaps trillions, of our economic future and future law enforcement revenues are at stake here.

I'm specifically referring to the SW Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protection Act (located in three separate pending congressional bills), Senate Bill 192 The River Democracy Act which appears it would affect over 3 million acres of federally managed land in Oregon, and Senate Bill 1589 the Oregon Recreation Enhancement Act. Each one of these bills also targets Josephine County, our home county.

In 2021, Senator Wyden of Oregon has been trying to tell you that all of Oregon is in favor of these proposals. Nothing could be further from the truth. In an editorial from the Capital Press on August 5, 2021, Oregon representative Bentz was quoted as having surveyed the County Commissioners in his district and 53 of 63 County Commissioners oppose the River Democracy Act. Josephine County has held many advisory votes over the years to take the local pulse of whether we should advocate for similar federal

proposals. Overwhelmingly, close to two out of every three Josephine County voters do not want additional federally managed land to be locked up in Josephine County.

That's because locking up our federally managed lands hurts our economic future, it increases our forest fire risk by no longer allowing all the tools that would otherwise be available for the proper timber management in our forests, and it even makes the management of these lands by BLM and the USFS much more complex and costly. These bills do nothing to enhance recreation or protect our watersheds. All the environmental regulations we need to protect our watersheds are already in place today, and nothing is legally prohibiting recreational access in these areas today. I can say that confidently because on my board of directors is a former USFS professional that spent over 40 years with the USFS, a big chunk of that time as a watershed protection specialist here in our area.

Senator Wyden's office won't even provide us here in Josephine County with detailed maps of the areas that would be affected by the River Democracy Act after months of trying to get maps. One other County in Oregon that is also opposed to this bill, paid thousands of dollars to get a consultant to draw up detailed maps of the proposed wildland expansion areas included in this Act, and our County is considering doing something similar after Senator Wyden's failure to communicate.

We have submitted to the record a letter that we wrote all the way back in 2012 that we successfully used to stop a similar federal wildland expansion proposal that was before this committee in 2012 (attached Exhibit A). The House Natural Resources Committee was told that there were no mines or roads in the specific wildlands area that was to be enlarged, but when our Oregon congressional delegation ignored our local voice and we sent this letter to an out of state congressman, he brought the truth to this committee and the effort was halted once the truth came to light. But then we lost much of this land area again in a congressional Act in 2019 when Oregon's congressional delegation pushed through a similar wildland expansion quickly without taking any input here at the local level.

The Oregon congressional delegation, for the most part, has not been truthful this year regarding these federal land proposals. These proposals come with nothing but costs today, costs for the future, and no benefits. Kill these costly bills and focus your time on true ways that incentivize critical mineral research, domestic critical mineral production, and activities that actually do make a positive impact on wildfire prevention, preserve our natural beauty, and enhance tourism in SW Oregon.

As for the SW Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protection Act which would lock up over 100,000 acres of federally managed land, primarily in Josephine County, we have data on a small mineral development immediately adjacent to this acreage that speaks to the billions of minerals that would be lost forever in this Act. At the relatively small Turner-Albright mine, almost immediately adjacent to this proposed mineral withdrawal territory,

almost 10 years ago they proved up a critical mineral and precious metal resource of over \$100 million in value on this relatively small adjacent acreage. There are also tellurium and nickel deposits in these areas. Nickel is so sought after for electric cars that the electric car company Tesla bought a large stake in an offshore nickel mining operation.

No substantial modern mineral assessments have ever been done within the proposed mineral withdrawal area, but simply the fact that calling this a mineral withdrawal recognizes that there are significant minerals within this area. And almost the whole area that would be withdrawn doesn't even have any water or salmon (see the previously mentioned video). But above all, the few waterways present in this area are already protected by current environmental law! The way we do small mineral developments doesn't impact waterways in the slightest, but regardless of who wants to a mineral development it should be stated for the record that these watersheds are already legally "protected." Again, this SW Oregon Watershed and Salmon Protect Act is merely a taking from the citizens of Josephine County and SW Oregon which should be compensated if passed with a minimum of \$200 million per 100,000 acres withdrawn.

I've never met anyone that wants or intends to hurt our local watersheds or negatively impact our local fish runs. Environmental laws already in place already provide adequate protections for our waterways. In the last two decades the only "mining" operations that caused environmental problems were several dam removal projects that were pushed through by environmental and conservation groups where these groups had dams removed without even doing the proper mineral and environmental testing procedures. What an environmental disaster they created by removing certain dams! You won't find a commercial mining operation in SW Oregon that caused any environmental problems in the last 20 years, and current law ensures that our watersheds remain protected.

The only thing that needs protection is our future economy and our future local law enforcement revenues. If these four federal bills are pushed through and disregard our local input, we demand compensation for local law enforcement for the direct taking from the people of Josephine County and SW Oregon.

Sincerely,

Jay Meredith, CPA
CFO and Board Chair
American Mineral Research, Inc.
www.AmericanMineralResearch.com