

1 **Resolution to Protect Orcas by Restricting Suction Dredge Mining**  
2

3 **WHEREAS** Suction Dredge Mining, a destructive form of mining that uses motorized equipment in  
4 rivers and streams in order to extract gold and other metals, is sometimes used in Washington  
5 streams and rivers, where it inflicts serious damage to salmon spawning beds;  
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7 **WHEREAS** the three Southern Resident Orca pods, that inhabit Puget Sound and Washington  
8 coastal waters during most of the year, rely on salmon as their principal food;  
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10 **WHEREAS** those three orca pods are the only orca population formally listed as “endangered”  
11 under the Endangered Species Act, having been so designated in 2005 by both the National Marine  
12 Fisheries Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;  
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14 **WHEREAS** Ken Balcomb, a whale researcher for over forty years and the founder of the Center for  
15 Whale Research in Friday Harbor, has documented the declining numbers of the Southern Resident  
16 Orcas as documented during a KING-5 TV segment on August 8, 2019 - that their decline is  
17 primarily due to their not getting enough to eat;  
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19 **WHEREAS** natural resource scientists, anglers, and members of the general public have expressed  
20 concern regarding the adverse impacts of Suction Dredge Mining on salmon redds (spawning beds)  
21 in Washington streams and rivers;  
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23 **WHEREAS** the Washington State Legislature passed four bills in 2019 to protect our Southern  
24 Resident Orca pods, but failed to address the critical need to protect salmon spawning beds;  
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26 **WHEREAS** the Oregon Legislature limited Suction Dredge Mining by prohibiting such practice in  
27 20,700 miles of streams and rivers it has designated as Critical Spawning Areas;  
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29 **WHEREAS** the State of California, as of August 6, 2019 (and continuing to this day), has banned  
30 Suction Dredge Mining in all of the State's streams and rivers;  
31

32 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Inslee and  
33 to state legislators asking them to pass legislation in its 2020 Supplemental Session that will help  
34 ensure that the Southern Resident Orca pods have a prey base sufficient to rebuild their seriously  
35 depleted numbers by (1) preferably banning outright the practice of Suction Dredge Mining in all  
36 Washington State streams and rivers (as in California), or by (2) alternatively requiring designation  
37 and protection of critical spawning and foraging areas in specified Washington streams and rivers  
38 (as in Oregon) where suction dredge mining is banned.  
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40  
41 Adopted by Jefferson County Democrats and Submitted to ECC for passage 2019 Dec 11. Contact  
42 Jim Freeburg 206-245-0059, [jifreeburg@yahoo.com](mailto:jifreeburg@yahoo.com)  
43

44 Adopted by the Environment and Climate Caucus with minor edits 2020 Jan 17. Contact Steve  
45 Verhey, ECC Chair [verheys@hotmail.com](mailto:verheys@hotmail.com) (509) 899-4956 or Angie Homola, Resolutions Chair (360)  
46 632-3016

Submitted by the Washington State Democratic Party Environment and Climate Caucus to the  
WSDCC for consideration at its February 2, 2020 meeting in Vancouver, Washington. (Date  
Submitted 01/17/2020)

This Resolution was **PASSED** by the WSDCC on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020

47

48 References: 1. Oregon legislature 2018 Bill 3, and 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals decision

49 2. <https://westernlaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/OR-SB-3-Suction-Dredge-Mining.pdf>

50 3. <http://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2018/09/12/16-35262.pdf>

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