

June 23, 2021

Op-Ed

## Wyden Misrepresented Oregon to the World on June 23



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Senator Ron Wyden made multiple misrepresentations when unveiling S.192 the 2021 River Democracy Act in front of the National Parks Subcommittee Legislative Hearing on June 23, 2021. Found on the Senate's committee website, Wyden's comments start at 23 minutes into the video recording.

Wyden and his hand-picked witness referenced a couple small towns near NE Oregon, but failed to make known the opinions throughout the majority of Oregon's rural areas as to these federal land-grabs and the nature of the land attempted to be grabbed by this bill, H.R. 803, and the Oregon Recreation Enhancement Act (ORE) all which currently reside in the Senate.

For example, SW Oregon where we live is unlike anywhere else in Oregon or North America...unique and rich geology, mountains, rivers, natural views, and small scale environmentally friendly green energy mineral development opportunities that would not conflict with any recreation. We at American Mineral Research have worked with DOGAMI and OSU and world famous geologists to document the rare critical minerals such as tellurium that we have in our part of the state (most rare element on the Department of Interior Critical Mineral List and used to manufacture high-efficiency thin-film solar panels).

Wyden claims in this hearing he has "always tried to throw open the doors of government...The River Democracy Act is another such effort to listen to the people of my home state in every nook and cranny of Oregon." Senator Wyden, we've polled County Commissioners in Josephine County, Jackson County, and one of the county leaders in Douglas County. According to them, you've never reached out to any of them before writing this bill. And these are the counties most adversely affected by the bill...particularly Josephine County. One Josephine County Commissioner has requested a map of the acreage that would be locked up under this proposal months ago...with no success from our Senators' offices that are supposed to represent all of Oregon. Wyden repeats this misrepresentation about going "to the people in every part of my state."

If he had checked, he would have learned about ballot measure 17-72, May 2016 election in Josephine County: Advisory Question on the Rogue River's Proposed Federal Designation. QUESTION: In your opinion, should Congress designate 63 additional miles of the Rogue River as a Wild and Scenic River? And 68.6% of Josephine County voters said NO. Senator Wyden, this is a landslide NO.

Perhaps voters and residents in Josephine County, where 2/3rds of the land is federally managed land, and SW Oregon (much of the same) understand that because of how our federal land is managed, rural Josephine County had less law enforcement than most third-world countries from 2012-2017? We're not out of this law enforcement funding crisis yet, because now Congress wants to lock up even more of our lands.

Senator Wyden mentions the Rough & Ready Creek in relation to river guides in Southern Oregon. This creek and watershed area is dry the majority of the year, every year. You couldn't raft in this creek even you wanted to. We produced a 21 minute mini-documentary about this area that Wyden, Merkley, and

Rep. DeFazio are trying to take away from us in SW Oregon and posted it on YouTube on June 3, 2021. **Just go to YouTube and search for American Mineral Research to see this documentary and the actual truth behind these federal proposals.** Not only will you see the truth, but you'll see a professional that worked for the US Forest Service for over 40 years show that environmental protections are already in place in these proposed mineral withdrawal and wildland expansion areas.

Had Senator Wyden actually checked with us in SW Oregon, perhaps he would have learned we have green energy critical minerals like Tellurium and incredible small scale environmentally friendly mineral development (read small business) opportunities in SW Oregon, recreation is already strong and wouldn't be affected in absence of these proposals, catastrophic fire risk can be lessened by avoiding these federal land lockups, and the vast majority of people in the most affected areas like SW Oregon do not support these federal bills.

Senator Wyden, this bill does not come from "the people of Oregon, the Oregon Way" as you stated. Wyden stated later in the hearing, "throwing open the doors of government, in my view is a prime responsibility for a western Senator," however from our perspective in SW Oregon, there is a locked vault door a foot thick to the doors of government.

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