



**April 18, 2019**

**Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Education**

**Senator Lew Frederick and Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chairs**

**Testimony in Support of Oregon Climate Change Research Institute  
Presented by Tom Byler, Director**

Thank you for the opportunity to express the Water Resources Department's support for continued state funding for the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI) at Oregon State University as included in the Governor's Budget.

As the science lead for the state on climate change specific to Oregon, OCCRI has been a valuable partner and key source of information in the Water Resources Department's efforts to meet and plan for Oregonians' current and future water needs. Examples of this work include:

- OCCRI's information is integral in helping the State to better understand projected changes in temperature, precipitation, snowpack, drought, and extreme flood events and how those changes may impact the availability of and demands for water in the future. This information has been and will continue to be essential in the development, implementation, and updating of Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy as specified in ORS 536.220.
- OCCRI also provides critical technical support to the State of Oregon's Drought Readiness Council and Water Supply Availability Committee as they assess water supplies and detect drought conditions within the state. The Committee and Council serve as a coordination hub to advise the Governor on drought conditions and the need for drought declarations. As a member of both, OCCRI has been working on the development of metrics that can help Oregon better detect and respond to drought. OCCRI's scientific expertise also helps the two groups better understand how current conditions compare to forecasted changes in precipitation and temperature and what that means for Oregon's water future.
- OCCRI is engaging with local, place-based, collaborative water planning efforts to help communities assess projected changes in risks to water supplies associated with droughts, floods, and changing water conditions. This information will help communities develop strategies to address risks to water supplies under changing climatic conditions.

The State of Oregon and Oregonians benefit from OCCRI's work. The Department supports continued funding of this program.