



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

February 3, 2021

To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources  
Senator Kathleen Taylor and Representative Jeff Reardon, Co-Chairs  
Members of the Committee

Email: <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2021R1/Testimony/JWMNR>

Re: **HB 5010- Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) Budget – Comments**

The League of Women Voters has a comprehensive position adopted in 1995 on Hazards, a part of which is:

*The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that all levels of government share the responsibility of coordinating, implementing and funding an effective program to mitigate Oregon's earthquake and tsunami hazards. Priority must be given to mitigation that protects human life and safeguards critical life support systems.*

*When siting critical facilities, tsunami run up and inundation as well as seismic factors such as severe ground shaking, liquefaction, massive landslide potential, and subsidence should be considered.*

*Geological reports identifying property at risk should be on file and accessible to the public. Property that poses extreme hazards should be designated as unbuildable.*

We also have strong positions in support of our land use planning program of which Goal 7, Natural Hazards, is an important element. There are critical linkages among agencies' duties regarding Oregonians' public safety regarding this very important issue. **The Dept. of Land Conservation and Development has a role and the science received from DOGAMI is important guidance for local governments as they plan their communities.** The planning discussion among agencies to address updating the 1995 tsunami line, for instance, which relates to sea level rise and climate change events, and what the state's responsibility is toward public safety, is one of the important scientific data provided by DOGAMI scientists.

The League believes DOGAMI's scientific information, including the LIDAR program, is critical to good decision making in a variety of areas, both at the state and local level. Although we understand that more populated areas of the state have been mapped, landslides and channel migration also occur in less populated areas. Also, we understand that DOGAMI's LIDAR information is open source—public information and available to all. We are concerned by the loss of that scientific work.

Earthquake, Landslide and Coastal Erosion information are especially important for both public infrastructure siting and private investments. The use of DOGAMI's multiple data collection tools help make Oregonians safer. Because of that, **we support some public investment--General Funds--to continue this important work as we have in past years. Oregon needs to stabilize our science personnel. In fact, that is why we listened to the recommendation from the Governor's Office around moving the GS&G division to DLCD. As was mentioned during Monday's meeting, we lost a very experienced scientist this last year. The science is critical to Oregonians' safety.**

The fluctuating grant funding continues to have an impact on personnel. We appreciate the work by the Governor's Office and the Legislative Fiscal Office to analyze the grant opportunities and the various

projects DOGAMI is currently obligated to complete and the view of future scientific needs for Oregon related to continuing natural hazards. Our recent wildfires will cause a significant increase in landslides that will change the geography of those areas. Updating and monitoring that information is critical to public safety.

**The League continues to support funding for data collection in all natural resource agencies because accurate scientific data saves public monies and provides for good public and private planning and investments.** If Oregon is going to continue **groundwater studies**, having the scientific skills provided by DOGAMI will continue to be important. At the rate we are going, it will be 35-50 years before we have mapped Oregon's groundwater! DOGAMI might also have a role in providing the science around geologic stability, earthquake possibilities and tsunamis as we move forward with our **dam safety program**.

The League also supports efficiencies and streamlining of permitting processes so long as environmental protections are factored into final decisions. We continue to follow the consolidated permitting process being used for the first time with the gold mine application of the Grassy Mountain area near Vale, OR. We will want to hear from both the multiple agencies and the applicant at the end of this process to determine whether or not this was a positive process for both. **For the League, it is important that the agencies' missions are being met while fairly adjudicating the outcome of the application.** We were pleased that the Emergency Board authorized a staff position to manage this process. During the first part of the preapplication process a staffer was loaned from DEQ for that purpose. It is an important project with many implications for the future of mining in Oregon.

**We supported the move of the MLRR division to the Dept. of Environmental Quality.** While we appreciated that the permitted community stepped up to increase their fees in order to keep the staffing, the new EDMS program at DEQ might be able to be modified to provide e-permitting which will be an advantage for this division and the permittees. **Now that it seems that DOGAMI will not be split up, we hope that they might be able to contract with DEQ to take advantage of their new EDMS system.** We would hope that the administrative costs might also be lessened with this move. **We continue to be frustrated that KPM #4 related to site inspections continues to be deficient—instead of improvement, we see decline yet again.**

DOGAMI is a small agency with a big public safety mission: to provide the science needed for policymakers to consider when making decisions to protect Oregonians. **It is time to find efficiencies in order to keep as many scientists as possible. We appreciate the analysis of the Legislative Fiscal Office as they detailed each staffing position and grant opportunities. Some General Funds are necessary, but we had hoped that moving the Geologic Survey and Services Division to the Dept. of Land Conservation and Development would stabilize the division and provide the proper nexus with our land use program and Goal 7: Natural Hazards in order that our local jurisdictions can properly protect Oregonians.**

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



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