

As a researcher and graduate student in Oregon, I rely heavily on the data and science that DOGAMI provides to the public free of charge. Further, I depend on their research as much as the rest of the constituency does in that we live in great state that is riddled with natural hazards that are poorly understood. It has been made repeatedly clear that DOGAMI has significant structural pitfalls which hinder its ability to function in our government, but the overall benefit that their work provides to the public is immense. In the past, DOGAMI has had a significant amount of self-funding from contract work and from federal grant money. For a variety of reasons, that grant money has been in short supply. Many foresee this trend to change in the future, but for now DOGAMI is increasingly dependent on state funding.

That state funding will continue to be used to analyze faults, earthquakes, landslides, and other aspects of our natural world that shape the land we all see and experience. It is also their imperative duty to qualify and quantify that that natural world poses to the built environment. Our magnificent Oregon Coast is one of the best examples of this. Nearly every winter, homes fall into the sea from the pounding winter waves and landslides affect the limited transportation routes over the Coast Range. While several different agencies are responsible for those various things, the underlying geologic research conducted by DOGAMI ties them all together and makes that work more efficient and higher quality. DOGAMI already has a very limited staff. Science is expensive, and reducing their staff and budget will not somehow solve the structural problems that they face. Budget cuts will make DOGAMI slower, less effective, and less efficient. While we in the geoscience world are thankful it is not being eliminated, we must also rally to ensure that DOGAMI is able to do as much of its work as possible as much of the time as possible.

Ultimately, any discussion of geoscience in Oregon must refer to the Cascadia Subduction Zone (CSZ). The southernmost section of the CSZ - running from Humboldt Bay to around Cape Blanco - has produced a major earthquake and tsunami every 243 years, on average, since time immemorial. The last one occurred sometime on the night of January 26, 1700, which we know from cross-checking tsunami records in Japan. If you do the math, we are in an above-average timespan between major earthquakes at 321 years. It is likely that I will see this earthquake in my lifetime. We in Oregon are fortunate to have a vast network of scientists researching how and when the next earthquake might happen, but a key component of that research network is here at DOGAMI. By eliminating the ability to effectively research Cascadia and other hazards (such as the three poorly-understood faults running through the Portland Basin), we condemn ourselves to negligence and willful ignorance of the world we live in.

One of DOGAMI's less appreciated successes is its magnificent website, oregongeology.org. In it is a treasure trove of data ranging from historic mining records dating to the 1860s to maps of faults that I am studying now. My thesis research is dependent on the laser mapping they have coordinated of much of the state. This mapping has revealed numerous faults and earthquake features we never would have known about otherwise. It is due to DOGAMI's successes that myself and other geoscientists are able to assess seismic hazard across the state and to push the boundaries of our collective knowledge. By extension, our rural residents, city planners, and industries are able to assess hazards and other things for themselves using this vast data library which exists. So, for the preservation of current knowledge and assurance of continued state-sponsored geologic research, please ensure DOGAMI retains its already thin budget. Knowledge and safety are too important to allow to go by the wayside.