

March 18, 2021

Oregon State Legislature
House Committee on Rules
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Re: House Bill 2605 – Tsunami Design Standards

Chair Smith Warner and members of the House Committee on Rules:

On behalf of Oregon’s 11 community hospitals located on the Oregon Coast and the patients they serve, the Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems (OAHHS) has concerns about House Bill 2605. While we appreciate the bill’s focus on safety through enhanced tsunami design standards, we are concerned about the role that the Department of Geology & Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) would play and their potential influence over development and construction.

In 2019, House Bill 3309 in 2019 removed the 25-year-old requirement that gave DOGAMI the right to deny construction of essential facilities in coastal areas that are prone to tsunamis. In HB 2605 developers would be required to consult DOGAMI who would then make “determinations” and recommendations. Given that part of these determinations includes “design or other changes” that DOGAMI “deems advisable **or necessary**”, we are concerned that DOGAMI would again be allowed to deny construction of essential facilities based on their opinions.

Additionally, the requirement that DOGAMI’s determination and recommendations would be included with the permit documents leads to concerns that if a developer or building owner did not adhere to all DOGAMI’s recommendations, they could they face liability in the event of an earthquake or tsunami event.

We recognize that the concerns expressed here are not what is intended by the bill, but the language currently included in HB 2605 causes these to be reasonable potential effects of the legislation. We hope that the committee will consider these issues in relation to the long-term safety and development of essential facilities on the Oregon Coast.

Thank you,



Andi Easton
Vice President of Government Affairs
Oregon Association of Hospitals and Health Systems