

To: Education Subcommittee, Joint Committee on Ways & Means  
From: Oregon Wild  
Re: Budget Request for the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI)  
Date: 5/10/21

Dear Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Ways & Means,

I am submitting written testimony in support of funding the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI) at the requested 7.42 percent budget increase. OCCRI provides the state of Oregon with critical resources for understanding and responding to climate change — one of the greatest socio-economic and environmental challenges of our time. As state decision makers, Oregonians look to you to develop and support effective solutions to this growing threat. Support from climate experts and access to the best available science regarding climate change is critical to achieving this.

OCCRI houses the Oregon Climate Service, which is recognized as Oregon's state climate office. OCCRI's research is critical for helping Oregon and the rest of the country mitigate and prepare for the impacts of a rapidly changing climate. It is clear that the impacts of climate change are becoming more dire, with numerous observable impacts already occurring across the country. Scientists are recording an alarming loss of sea ice, rapid sea-level rise, and longer and more intense heat waves. In the Pacific Northwest, we are seeing more severe wildfires as a result of hotter and drier conditions, costing people their lives and livelihoods.

Oregon is recognized as a national destination for its access to scenic rivers, beaches, forests, and mountains. The state offers its residents unparalleled access to outdoor beauty and natural resources — all of which are threatened by climate impacts. Oregon Wild depends on climate researchers at OCCRI to inform the decisions we make to protect these special places and valuable natural resources. Today, Oregon is already experiencing reduced snowfall, impacting our winter sports industry. Drought and warmer temperatures are also increasing water temperatures, threatening Oregon's valuable salmon and steelhead runs.

A 7.42 percent increase will enhance OCCRI's capacity to support Oregon's goals for a socially equitable response to climate change. This funding should be a top priority for state legislators as Oregon faces worsening impacts from climate change and seeks to protect the state's communities and natural systems.

Sincerely,  
Lauren Anderson  
Forest Climate Policy Coordinator  
Oregon Wild