

January 31, 2021

Dear Members of Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Senator Taylor
Representative Reardon
Senator Anderson
Senator Frederick
Representative Breese-Iverson
Representative Holvey
Representative Pham
Representative DB Smith

I am writing in opposition of HB5010, which is the first step to essentially get rid of DOGAMI.

This would be an over \$3 million cut in the budget with 21 positions to be eliminated during the biennium. The “official” justification for these cuts is basically a) that the department has “overspent” and b) the state needs to save money so let’s make cuts here. To a) - there appears to be little recognition that this is how a science-based “agency” funding works (varies year by year based on external grants received and the challenges with both meeting the science expectations AND working to find new money – ask any research scientist at Oregon’s universities!). There is also no recognition that perhaps the overspend is because there is A LOT of work to do to address Oregon geological data needs! As my mom would say “you can’t squeeze blood out of a turnip! All humor aside, Oregon legislature has underfunded an essential science department and now the governor is blaming them for that shortfall. This makes no sense! Nowhere is it said the work of DOGAMI is not needed. The saving money argument is weak! \$3 million is just a blip on the screen compared to other Oregon budget items. For example, the Governor's OEM budget for the next biennium is \$336.9 million - an 18.7% increase from 2019-20 Legislatively approved budget. That includes \$22.1 million for the Oregon Youth Challenge Program (a 13.6% increase from current budget) (Governor Brown’s 2021-23 “Oregon for ALL: Creating a place where everyone can thrive” Budget page 115). While I am very much in support of STEM and Youth in Oregon its cognitive dissonance to cut science for REAL imminent problems facing Oregonians, such as a ~M-9 Cascadia subduction zone earthquake and then train Oregon Youth to be scientist! Further for OEM preparedness efforts to be effective they need to be informed by the science developed by DOGAMI.

So, what is this really about? The effort to cut DOGAMI, bottom line, look to be an attempt to further eliminate the work of DOGAMI that stand in developers' way. Why else make such significant cuts, disperse it and essentially get rid of it by the end of the biennium? It's clearly not about budget! Documents provided to this committee from DAS (PPT slide # 8) indicate significant cuts (3 million) along with the language “maintains essential program work” is a fallacy! The “essential program work” will not be able to be continued with these significant staff cuts! Cutting this department is going backwards, not forward. If anything, Oregon should be investing MORE in DOGAMI science-based geological knowledge, preparedness and improving the coordination between OEM and scientist! Please oppose this bill and efforts by

the Governor to get rid of DOGAMI. Thousands of Oregonians oppose it as evidenced by recent Change dot org petition, as do I!

Oregon should learn AND apply lessons from international disasters, such as the Tōhoku and Sumatra earthquakes and subsequent tsunamis. Lessons learned captured in international symposiums, research papers and by others, like myself, involved in evaluation of disaster response efforts repeatedly have stated that to prevent the worst impact of disaster countries (and states) need to build resilience. In addition, per the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) “coordination” must occur to reduce risk - i.e., “reduce risk depends on communication and information exchange between the scientific community and politicians” and “develop and enforce building codes in areas where earthquake and tsunamis are common” (UNDRR, 2005). DOGAMI currently IS engaged in doing these things, thus helping Oregon to be more resilient. Dispersing what is left of and eventually getting rid of DOGAMI goes in the opposite direction recommended by international experts. Getting rid of DOGAMI and making these significant cuts will result in reduced evidence generation and science-informed policies and yes, weakened building codes such as tsunami inundation zones. This will have an impact on Oregonian’s lives! We should listen to international experts who have experience large subduction zone earthquakes, like Oregon WILL experience. We should not be “penny wise and pound foolish”. In addition, COVID-19 should be a teachable moment for Oregon – prevention and planning and science matter! Now is not the time to cut DOGAMI with a looming earthquake event ahead of us! Oregon should retain DOGAMI, its funding and its science contributions to evidence-based policies and decision making.

Finally, Oregon earthquake mitigation and preparedness planning should be driven by science and experts, not by developers or politicians or administrators who have no content expertise. As a native Oregonian I want to see Oregon grow and thrive. We CAN develop along the coast AND do it smartly - but that requires good science so we build in the right places to prevent loss of life, infrastructure and money! DOGAMI helps us do that! Getting rid of DOGAMI is the wrong decision at the wrong time! I ask each of you, as Oregon elected officials to please stand with science and not support HB5010 the elimination of DOGAMI or the associated cuts.

Thank you!

Warmly,

Kay Mattson

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