



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

March 6, 2023

Joint Ways & Means Committee Co-Chairs
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez,

We are writing in support of Oregon Tech's emergency request for \$17.9 million to renovate the institution's unique geothermal heating system. This infrastructure is critical to our state's only polytechnic university's continued operations.

Geothermal energy has been used since the 1960s to provide primary heating to the Klamath Falls campus and was the primary factor for locating the campus where it is today. Oregon Tech pumps hot water ($\approx 195^{\circ}\text{F}$) from below the earth's surface through multiple wells to a storage tank, where it then flows by gravity to various parts of the campus through both underground and tunnel-encased piping. The geothermal water is used to provide heating for campus buildings, snow melting for sidewalks providing ADA pathways, and domestic hot water. **The geothermal resource is the only source of heating for most of the campus.**

Since these systems were built over 60 years ago the existing geothermal wells and delivery systems are aging and experiencing multiple, repeated, single points of failure affecting critical student services and facilities. The critical nature of the system's current condition is a genuine life-safety risk with severe, immediate implications for student and employee safety and to the university's daily operations.

In June 2022, a thorough analysis performed by an engineering firm found \$14.9 million (\$17.9 million adjusted for inflation) in estimated repairs necessary to address immediate emergent and near-term life safety risks and to avoid imminent system failure, **which would require campus closure, displacing students, staff, and impacting the economy of south-central Oregon.**

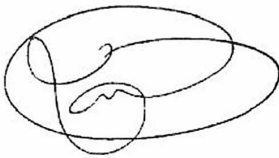
Oregon Tech's geothermal heating system is a unique state asset and it is incumbent upon the legislature to preserve this valuable teaching, learning, and research tool. Not only does this zero-emission renewable energy source protect Oregon Tech from inflated utility costs, it saves Oregon Tech \$1.4 million a year and is used for research at the home of the Oregon Renewable Energy Center.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and service to our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Werner Reschke'.

E. WERNER RESCHKE
State Representative, HD 55
The Crater Lake District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emily McIntire'.

Emily McIntire
State Representative, HD 56

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emerson Levy'.

Emerson Levy
State Representative, HD 53

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Aaron Woods'.

Aaron Woods
State Senator, SD 13