

March 14, 2023

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

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez,

As classified staff at Oregon Institute of Technology (“Oregon Tech”), we are writing in support of Oregon Tech’s emergency request for the institution’s geothermal heating system. This infrastructure is critical to the institution’s operations, which support our faculty and staff in educating and serving the next generation of engineers, healthcare professionals, business professionals, and leaders.

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.

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.**

Our students, faculty, and staff deserve to have safe and modern facilities that will allow the university community to thrive for years to come. Thank you for your consideration of this request, and service to our state.

Sincerely,



**SEIU Local 90, President**