



Eugene Water & Electric Board

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February 20, 2025

House Committee on Higher Education Committee and Workforce Development

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE
Salem, OR 97301

Subject: Support for House Bill 3219 – Sustained State Funding for the Oregon Hazards Lab

Dear Chair Hudson, Vice-Chairs Harbick and Fragala, and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express our strong support for House Bill 3219, which seeks to establish sustained state funding for the Oregon Hazards Lab (OHAZ) at the University of Oregon. As the largest public utility in Oregon, the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) recognizes the vital role that the Oregon Hazards Lab plays in protecting Oregonians from natural and human-caused hazards. Through its seismic, wildfire, and remote sensing networks, OHAZ provides **real-time, life-saving data** that helps emergency responders and communities mitigate the impact of earthquakes, wildfires, landslides, and other disasters.

In the case of our growing wildfire threats, early warning for initial attack and monitoring of fires is essential to keep communities and critical infrastructure safe. EWEB worked with OHAZ to install the first AlertWildfire camera in the upper McKenzie River corridor after the Holiday Farm Fire. EWEB has also partnered with OHAZ as an early adopter of seismic monitors at its hydroelectric facilities. The ShakeAlert Earthquake Early Warning System and Wildfire Detection (AlertWest) systems are not theoretical—they are active, operational systems that directly protect lives and property.

Investing in OHAZ is a smart financial decision. Hazard monitoring and early warning systems save Oregon millions of dollars by reducing disaster response costs, infrastructure damage, and economic disruption. Without sustained state funding support, the long-term viability of these programs is at risk, leaving our communities vulnerable at a time when proactive resilience planning is more critical than ever.

We urge you to take **decisive action** by passing House Bill 3219 and securing the future of OHAZ. Doing so will ensure Oregon remains a leader in disaster resilience, protecting lives, property, and the state's economic well-being. We appreciate your leadership in advancing policies that safeguard our communities, and we stand ready to support you in this effort.

Sincerely,

Karen Kelley
Chief Operations Officer