



02/18/2025

**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,

On behalf of the High Desert Partnership, I am writing to express our support for House Bill 3219, which seeks to establish sustained state funding for the Oregon Hazards Lab (OHAZ) at the University of Oregon. High Desert Partnership is a regional nonprofit organization that convenes 6 diverse collaborative groups to build community resilience, sustainably manage natural resources and landscapes, and protect rural communities from catastrophic wildfire. We recognize the vital role that the Oregon Hazards Lab plays in ensuring the safety and security of Oregonians in the face of natural and human-made hazards.

We convene the Harney County Wildfire Collaborative who has in the past supported the Oregon Hazards Lab initiative of installing multi-hazard detection and early warning systems, particularly in relation to wildfire detection. In 2017, partners in the Wildfire Collaborative signed a letter of support, and moving forward we see value in continuing this program and the benefits it has provided to the Harney County community.

OHAZ is a critical asset to disaster preparedness and response efforts in Oregon and adjacent states. 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.

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 to maintain and expand its infrastructure, the long-term viability of these programs is at risk, leaving our communities more vulnerable at a time when proactive resilience planning is more critical than ever.

Sincerely,

Aaron Johnston, High Desert Partnership Forest and Rangeland Collaborative Coordinator,

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**High Desert Partnership**  
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