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April 14, 2025

Oregon State Legislature  
Attn: Higher Education Coordinating Committee

RE: Oregon Climate Change Research Institute and Oregon Climate Service

Dear members of the Higher Education Coordinating Committee,

Columbia Land Trust relies on the work of the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI) and Oregon Climate Service (OCS) hosted by Oregon State University. Columbia Land Trust is a regional conservation organization with a mission of conserving and caring for the vital lands, waters, and wildlife of the Columbia River region through sound science and strong relationships. We permanently protect and steward priority conservation lands to maintain and restore ecological integrity, critical wildlife habitat, and access. We also are the fiscal sponsor for the East Cascades Oak Partnership – an entity working to conserve and restore Oregon white oak habitats with nineteen tribal, federal, state, and local partners in the Columbia River Gorge and East Cascades. We rely on partners who provide crucial, state-wide climate information to inform management.

Columbia Land Trust staff are collaborating with members from the Oregon Climate Service to better understand how oak and pine are responding to forest management in an underserved rural community in south Wasco County experiencing extended drought and massive die-off of ponderosa pine. We rely on Oregon Climate Service to provide past and near-future climate data across our project sites that we use to evaluate variables affecting project success. The climate stations are installed on the Mt. Hood National Forest, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Reservation, and privately owned land, and results will be shared broadly through community collaborations on public, tribal, and private lands through the oak partnership, which has 370+ local members. Incidentally, one of these weather stations near Friend, Oregon provided critical real time climate data to firefighters protecting rural communities during the Larch Creek Wildfire in summer of 2024.

The work of OCCRI and OCS through Oregon State University is of great importance to our work, our forests, and our neighboring communities. If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me at [lindsayc@columbialandtrust.org](mailto:lindsayc@columbialandtrust.org).

Sincerely,

Lindsay Cornelius – East Cascades Oak Partnership Manager

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