



DEBRAH MARRIOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TESTIMONY PRESENTED TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
NATURAL RESOURCES SUBCOMMITTEE
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Good afternoon, Co-Chair Edwards and Co-Chair Unger and members of the Committee. My name is Debrah Marriott, Executive Director of the Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership. We are based in Portland and work in 28 Oregon and Washington communities along the lower 146 miles of the Columbia River.

We are a National Estuary Program created to provide regional collaboration, augment local efforts and fill gaps to advance on the ground improvements and protect the lower river and estuary. The National Estuary Program was created in 1987 by Congress, the same year Oregon created the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, for the exact same purpose: to establish a voluntary collaborative structure for natural resource protection, specifically the degraded water bodies of significance to the nation's economic and environmental well-being. Like OWEB, we are guided by a specific set of actions based on extensive assessment of current conditions and science.

We are governed by a 23 member Board of Directors comprised of public and private interests who have a stake in the lower Columbia river -- pulp and paper, ports, fishing, agriculture and forestry, education, retail, recreation, watershed councils, tribes, federal, state and local government. Our Science Work Group is comprised of public and private experts who guide our technical programs. Our partners extend beyond our board and science work group -- they include local watershed councils, diking districts, land trusts & conservancies, several thousand teachers and schools districts, technical assistance partners and educators. Our long term goal, like OWEB, is to gain ecologic uplift by investing in local communities: to improve the environment, maintain public health and create jobs. We have been implementing our action plan since 1999, focusing on three key areas: habitat restoration, contaminants reduction and education.

We receive a **small but critical amount of state funds**; the **Governors' budget** funds this work at \$254,055; we sustained a 25% reduction in 2009 that has not been restored. We ask for your continued support. Washington State is continuing their \$300,000 level of support.

What we do and how we do it is summed up in one word: Leveraging.

We leverage dollars, people & their expertise, and results.

The Estuary Partnership is an Economic Workhorse. State funds provide 50% of match required to receive federal funds. Combined, these funds restore habitat, implement temperature improvements, educate students, **and** they are the catalyst that raised \$10.2 M this biennium.

Your investment has a 40:1 return on state dollars.

We create jobs: 2,500 local on the ground jobs since 2000. **2013-15 funds will create 768 jobs.** These are family wage contractors placing culverts, building bridges, repairing tidegates.

We access and manage funds for smaller entities; this improves efficiencies and ensures a coordinated regional approach.

We provide data and analysis for the region so individual entities that don't have that capacity can spend their money on local projects and get the data and science they need to do their jobs.

We conduct regional effectiveness monitoring to ensure projects are gaining projected results and are adapted if they need to be.

We provide scientific rigor to local restoration projects by using a regional review and evaluation criteria, developed by our regional science work group, to ensure project outcomes meet local, state and federal priorities. Most of what we do is done by partners at the local level by investing in their infrastructure.

81% of funds we secure by leveraging state dollars currently are outsourced to partners to implement and monitor local restoration projects. Oregon examples include:

- \$1.8 million to Columbia River Estuary Study Task Force
 - Ft. Clatsop – restored tidal connections to 45 acres of floodplain
 - Colewort Creek – modifying a tidegate to 45 acres of habitat to fish
 - Otter Point – improving fish passage on 33.5 acres of wetlands
 - Youngs River – 80 acres of wetlands restored
- \$869,000 to Scappoose Watershed Council (an Oregon Plan Priority)
 - Installed several miles of fencing for farmers
 - Replaced failing culverts to open fish access to 30 acres & 3 miles of stream at Malarky Ranch
- \$625,000 to Oregon Parks & partners for Mirror Lake restoration
 - Replaced failing culvert with 70 bridge to improve salmon access; removing acres of invasive species and planting 22 acres to lower stream temperatures & create spawning areas for fish
- To Sandy River (an Oregon priority watershed)– 334 acres of riparian forest improved and invasive species removed
- To Tryon Creek – partnered with OWEB partnership to create spawning area
- Funding a field based ecologist to identify and implement projects in Scappoose Bay and Clatskanie, two priority watershed in the Oregon Plan
- \$279,000 to Lower Columbia River Watershed Council & Soil & Water Conservation District plus
 - Gnat Creek and Hungry Harbor opening 21 acres of diked wetlands
 - Deer Island – restoring estuarine habitat on the 4,500 acre site

9% funds K-12 applied science programs helping over 1,600 teachers meet state benchmarks.

9% funds stormwater projects, pesticide & pharmaceutical collections, data collection & dissemination, restoration prioritization, riparian tree plantings, regional forums, leveraging, and organizational support.

- We have helped two communities revise land use codes to meet federal and state stormwater discharge permits
- Reduced stormwater run-off at five schools, lowering utility bills
- Collected 10,000 pounds of pesticides, expanding the Oregon Pesticide Stewardship goals
- Funded an upland disposal feasibility to help lower river ports with dredge disposal needs

Your investment is getting **on the ground results**. In addition to the examples provided above, **we have:**

- Restored 18,433 acres of habitat at 173 sites with 100 partners
- Monitored effectiveness of regional restoration projects and adaptively managed them
- Completed 3 years monitoring water, sediment and fish tissue & 6 years of effectiveness monitoring
- Completed land cover, floodplain & bathymetry data & a regional prioritization strategy
- Provided applied learning programs to 50,200 students - 53% were at risk students – at schools including Astor Elementary in Astoria, Pederson Elementary in Scappoose and Clark Elementary in St. Helens, and Corbett Middle School in Portland
- Engaged 10,600 volunteers - at Oxbow Park, Meldrum Bar, Oaks Bottom, Scappoose Bay, Astoria Elementary Schoolyard and Sandy River – planting 47,700 native trees and shrubs

We **help the state meet its natural resource goals**, stretching OWEB, Fish & Wildlife, Parks and DEQ dollars: The nearly \$27 M we have invested in habitat expands OWEB efforts in the lower Willamette and lower Columbia river and estuary (often providing match for OWEB projects) and implements the *Oregon Plan for Salmon and Watersheds goals for:*

- **Habitats; Watershed Protection; Wetlands**

- **Marine and Freshwater Species**
- **Invasive Species**

We implement all five of OWEB goals: adaptive investment, local infrastructure developing, public awareness and involvement, partnership development and efficient accountability.

The \$5.6 M we have invested in toxics reduction expands DEQ's Watershed-based Toxics Monitoring & Pesticide Stewardship programs. We assist DEQ and EPA's toxics reduction work. Our riparian plantings are targeted along tributaries and parts of the mainstem that have TMDLs for temperature.

Our work with the lower river ports for upland disposal of dredge material and our sediment management planning implements actions in the **West Coast Governors' Agreement on Ocean Health**.

We implement actions in the 2008 Biological Opinion, the Army Corps restoration program and NOAA Recovery Module.

We are **accountable to Congress, the States**, all funders and the IRS. We have three state legislators, including Senator Dingfelder, who are advisors to the program to ensure we are implementing state priorities. We report to Congress each year on our progress.

Progress measures include:

- Habitat projects completed, acres restored, functions protected, stream miles opened
- Number of pesticide collection opportunities and volume collected
- Number of riparian plantings, geographic distribution, number of volunteers, trees planted and volume invasive plants removed
- Pre and post student testing
- Number of students & volunteers served
- State and federal priorities, including core water programs, implemented
- Less than 10% of funds go towards operations

The Lower Columbia River remains degraded:

- The 18,433 acres we have helped restore is only 22% of what has been lost since 1880.
- 13 species of salmonids are listed as threatened or endangered, all use the lower river twice during their lifecycle; A loss that decimated commercial fishing.
- Toxics banned in the 1970s and emerging contaminants are present in water, sediment and fish and exceed the thresholds for species survival - some cause male fish to morph to female. Household cats absorb these contaminants and show high levels of thyroid hormones that in humans cause birth defects and learning disabilities.
- There are inadequate resources of toxics reduction and clean, so the habitat we are restoring is not necessarily able to sustain species.
- Temperature and dissolved gas still exceed levels that support fish.
- Contaminants concentrate in the lower river inhibiting ports' economic viability.

Oregon & Washington State Funds are 4.6% of our budget but they are not replaceable and a lot is riding on them. Leveraged funds get a lot done but they are one-time competitive funds and can't be used to raise other funds. There is a great deal at risk: Money, Collaboration and Results.

What is at Stake: 2013-2015 funds from Oregon will:

- Secure \$1,200,000 in Congressional Funding
- Leverage \$10,200,000 from other public and private grants & donations, bring millions to the region and creating jobs
- Restore 1,000 – 2,000 acres of habitat dispersing nearly \$7,000,000 to local entities for restoration & effectiveness monitoring

- Engage 6,000 volunteers in 24 riparian plantings to reduce temperature & remove invasive species
- Provide 10,000 students with applied science learning projects
- Expand pesticide and pharmaceutical collection events

None of this is possible without core funding from Oregon. It would be difficult for the State to achieve our results alone and local entities certainly could not.

There is a lot more we need to do and it is a shared responsibility. To this end, we are working with **Congress to re-introduce the Columbia River Restoration Act** that would authorize Congress to appropriate \$33 million for grants to local entities, the states and tribes to reduce and remove contaminants and expand habitat restoration.

In closing, let me thank you for your sustained past investment in the lower Columbia River and estuary. Your investment secures significant federal and private funding; it gives us the stability to attract those funds.

We work your investment hard – giving a very strong financial return, putting Oregonians to work, educating our children and getting measurable environmental improvements that matter to local communities.

Honorable Chairs and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.



Lower Columbia

Estuary
Partnership



The Lower Columbia National Estuary

The Lower Columbia Estuary Partnership was formed by the states in 1995 to:

- **Focus on lower river concerns:** every migratory salmonid species uses the lower river twice in its lifetime; 50% loss of habitat; contaminated sediment, fish and water; and toxics hot spots inhibiting economic viability.
- **Coordinate efforts to improve efficiencies:** over 150 agencies of government have responsibilities for parts of it.
- **Get environmental results:** use science to achieve improvements.

The Columbia River is...

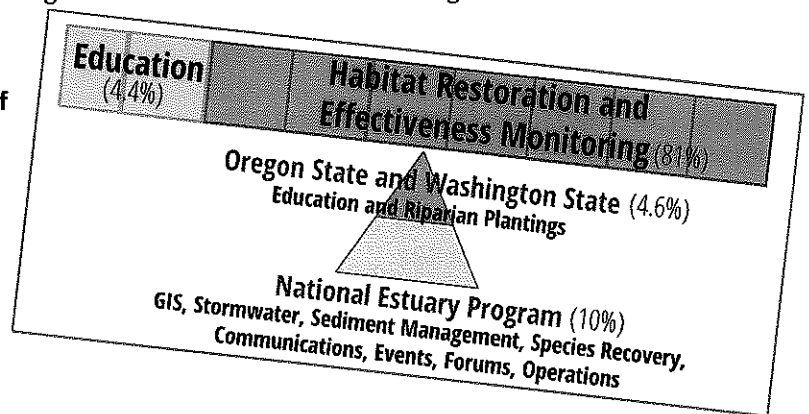
- **An Economic Transportation** corridor that provides thousands of jobs.
- **Home to 8 million people**, 2 million in lower river communities.
- **A Transportation Artery** that annually carries cargo worth \$20 billion, with 40,000 jobs dependent on this trade.
- **A Water Source** that irrigates more than 6,000,000 acres of irrigated agricultural land.
- **A Recreation Outlet** that brings \$15-\$20 million in revenue from dinner and overnight cruises annually.
- **A Power Generator** that produces more hydroelectric power than any other North American river.
- **A Food Source** that have constituted the largest salmon-producing river system in the world, with annual returns peaking at 16 million fish.
- **A National Treasure** designated an 'estuary of national significance' and one of the nation's 'great water bodies'.

An Economic Workhorse

In the lower Columbia a lot teeters on a small amount of state funding:

\$1 of State funds to the Estuary Partnership brings \$40. The \$250,000 invested by Oregon brings \$12,000,000 every two years to the region.

The Estuary Partnership has raised **over \$40 million for the region**. These are funds that local entities could not have accessed directly.



Creating Local Jobs
 This year, Estuary Partnership funds created **384 jobs**, with an average wage of **\$57,644**. Since 2000, Estuary Partnership funds have created **2,500 regional jobs**.

Estuary Partnership funds get distributed throughout the region and to local entities. This past biennium:

- 81% funded watershed councils, conservation entities, local governments, and tribal habitat restoration projects, making sure projects got the results needed.
- 9% provided applied science programs to students, helped teachers meet benchmarks, and delivered volunteer planting activities.
- 9% supported GIS mapping and data, riparian tree plantings, on-river & field programs, technical workshops & publications, regional forums, and organization operations, including leveraging.

Getting On-the-Ground Results

National Estuary Programs (NEPs) must achieve a high level of tangible environmental improvements in their study area. We are accountable to the states and Congress. *For the Estuary Partnership, that means:*

Protecting Ecosystems

- Restored 18,433 acres of habitat through work of 100 partners.
- Map and track 173 projects by restoration partners using geodatabase.
- Classified land use conditions along 605 miles of Columbia River shoreline.
- **Collected approximately 10,000 pounds of pesticides at a take back event.**
- Conducting a pilot pharmaceutical take back project in two Oregon counties.
- Completed an analysis of effectiveness of restoration projects.
- Monitored and evaluated legacy and emerging contaminants in sediment, water and fish tissue in juvenile salmonid in the lower river and estuary for three years.

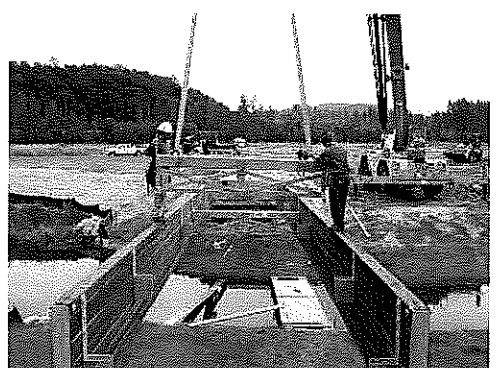
Advancing Science

- Collected & analyzed multiple data sets to improve decision making and prioritize habitat restoration.
- Monitoring effectiveness of restoration.
- Completed analysis of the changes in floodplain habitat over the past 140 years, comparing late 1800's maps with 2010 land cover data to prioritize habitat for restoration.
- Developed Ecosystem Classification to establish scientifically sound monitoring.
- Completed a GIS based strategic prioritization to identify habitat restoration sites based on the highest value at the ecosystem scale.
- Collected 19,000 acres of bathymetry data and mapped 300,000 acres of floodplain land cover.
- Assisted two communities in meeting federal stormwater requirements.
- Completed three years of monitoring for legacy and emerging contaminants in fish, sediment and water.

NEPs have to do this in collaborative partnerships. *For the Estuary Partnership, that means:*

Building Connections (Partnerships)

- Provided 50,220 students at 48 schools with 200,000 hours of applied learning and hands-on outdoor learning experiences.
- Provided education programs for 1,687 teachers and professional development workshops for 331.
- Engaged 10,660 volunteers and students and planted over 47,000 native trees and shrubs along riparian corridors.
- Leveraged federal, state & NEP funds to bring \$40,000,000 to the region.
- Convened the Science Work Group monthly; coordinated regional restoration prioritization, publish an array of scientific reports.
- Funded feasibility study of an upland disposal site for dredge material for lower river ports.
- Host technical workshops (land cover, bathymetry) to define & fill gaps.



Meeting State Priorities & Expanding State Capacity

NEPs must support local, state and federal priorities and must help implement those priorities. *For the Estuary partnership that means:*

OWEB Priorities Achieved:

Habitat Restoration

Estuary Partnership leveraging stretches OWEB dollars: **18,433 acres restored at 173 sites since 2003.**

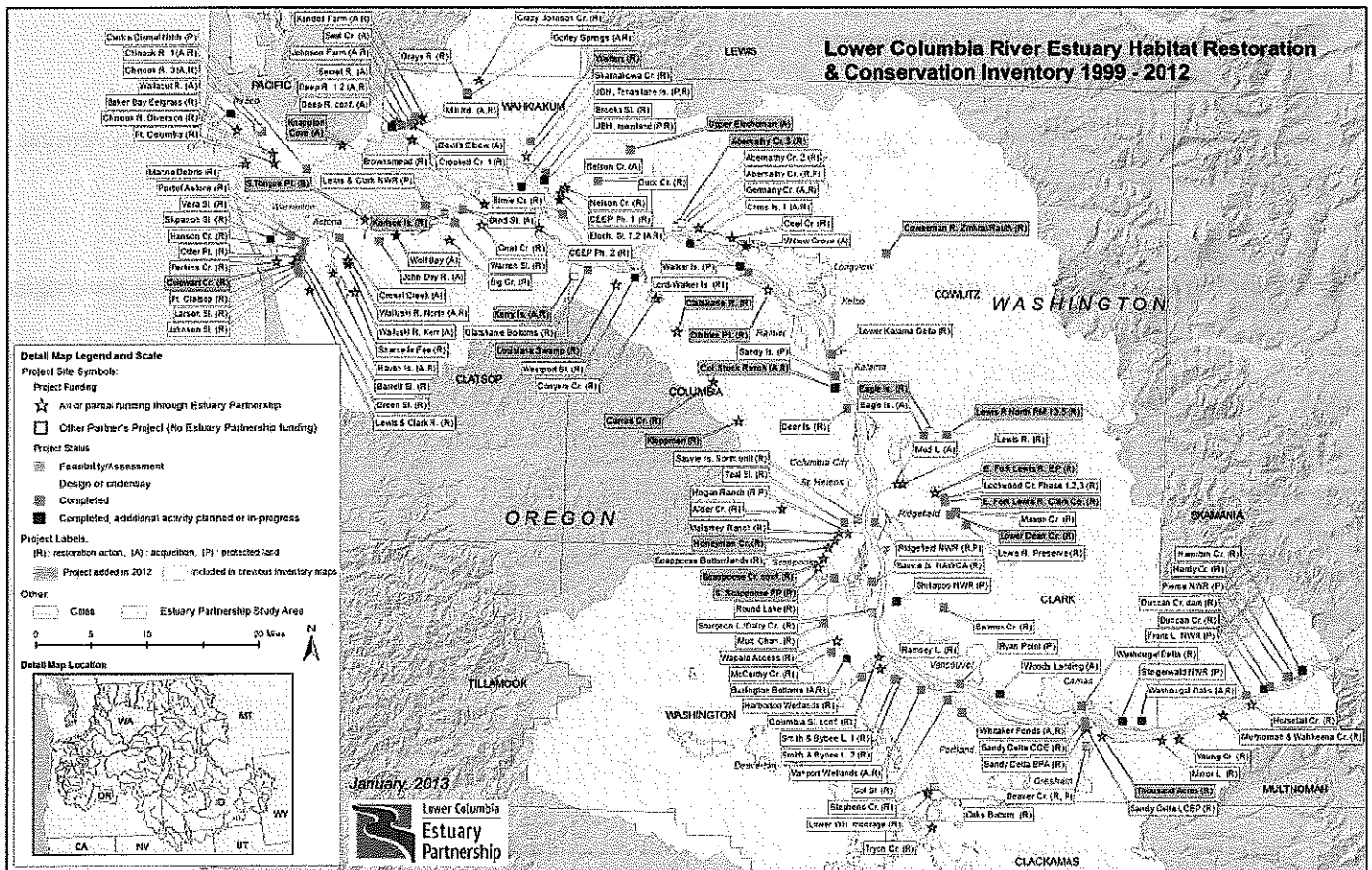
Oregon Plan: Identifies Scappoose, Lower Columbia River & Sandy River as priority areas.

- Estuary Partnership has provided **\$868,937 to the Scappoose Watershed Council & \$278,675 to the Lower Columbia River Watershed Council & Soil & Water Conservation District.**
- **Hired a field based restoration ecologist** who has worked with the three entities since 2011 helping fund and implement restoration projects.
- Implement restoration actions in the Federal *biological opinion* and the NOAA, Oregon and Washington Recovery Plans for ESA-listed salmon and steelhead.
- Maintain **restoration effectiveness monitoring** to evaluate the success of restoration actions.
- Collect **reference habitat data** at undisturbed locations to improve restoration design.
- Completed **Restoration Prioritization** with multiple data sets to show greatest ecological uplift.
- Compared **Historical (1880) floodplain** and land cover to current data to target recovery of desired habitat.

DEQ Priorities Advanced:

Water Quality and Toxics Reduction

- **TMDLs:** we plant native trees and shrubs along impaired riparian corridors to lower temperatures fish survivability.
- **Columbia River Toxics Reduction Working Group:** We serve as lower river implementer for EPA / DEQ Work Group, formed to identify and reduce toxics in the Columbia River Basin.
- **Columbia River Restoration Act:** We are working with Congress to re-introduce the CCRA to authorize Congress to appropriate \$33 million for grant funds to local entities to reduce runoff and other pollution, including clean-up of contaminated sites, collection events, etc. **The State of Oregon cannot do it alone. This would aid:**
 - **Senate Bill 737**
 - **Oregon Pesticide Stewardship Partnerships**
 - The Estuary Partnership collected 10,000 pounds of contaminants at one event.
 - We are hosting a pilot with Oregon Hospice and law enforcement to collect and dispose properly unused pharmaceuticals at end-of-life.

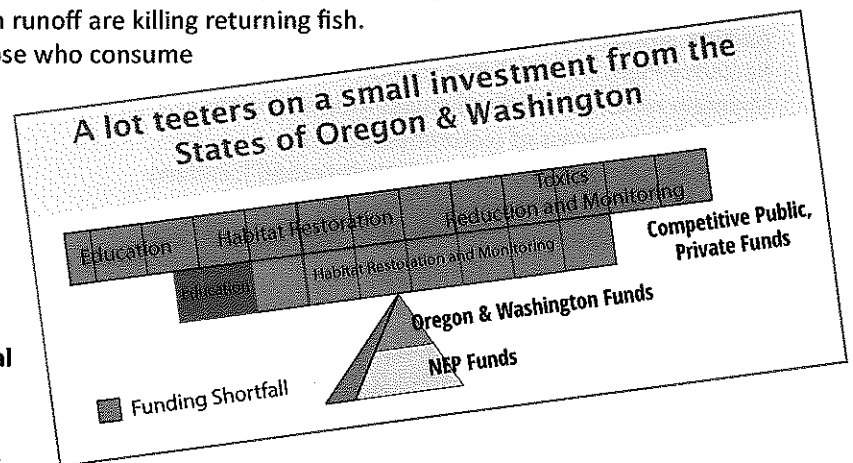


What is at Stake - 2013-2015 State Funds will:

- **Secure** \$1,200,000 in funding from Congress NEP.
- **Raise** \$10,200,000 in other project funds.
- **Restore** 1,000 – 2,000 acres of complex habitat & monitor effectiveness.
- **Prioritize** habitat restoration projects in region to implement Biological Opinion.
- **Expand** pesticide & pharmaceutical collection for communities.
- **Provide** 10,000 children over 50,000 hours of applied learning programs, field experiences, and service learning projects.
- **Engage** 6,000 families, students, corporate partners, church groups, scout troops and others in over 24 riparian plantings at multiple sites to help reduce temperature of impaired waters.
- **Help** 400 teachers meet benchmark requirements.
- **Engage** volunteers in invasive species removal.
- **Help** ports identify dredge disposal options and regional sediment planning options.
- **Create** 768 local jobs -- from haulers to construction workers to tree growers.

A lot more to do: Columbia River Restoration Act

- **There is no toxics clean up, no sustained monitoring.** We are killing the fish in the very areas we are restoring. NOAA studies confirm in Seattle's Longfellow Creek and Grover's Creek Hatchery in North Kitsap, areas, where millions have been invested in habitat restoration, toxics in runoff are killing returning fish.
- We are impairing human health, especially for those who consume high levels of fish.
- We are altering the hormonal balance in fish and other species: they cannot avoid predators, male fish are growing female eggs, reproduction is reduced. Household cats are absorbing these contaminants, that in humans cause increased thyroid hormones, birth defects and learning disabilities.
- **There is minimal funding for non-salmonid critical habitat restoration.** The Estuary Partnership floodplain analysis shows 70% loss of vegetated tidal wetlands & 55% loss of forested uplands. We have lost 84,000 acres since 1880.
- **School Funding to meet science benchmarks is abysmal.** Demand for our student programs outstrips capacity, leaving many teacher needs unfulfilled.



State funding is static and is not keeping up with inflation; means we are getting less and losing leveraging opportunities and jobs.

