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Testimony of Jerry Schmidt on SB 5512
Before the Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

Co Chair Senator Richard Devlin
Co Chair Representative Dan Rayfield

Mr. Co Chairs and members of the committee I am here to offer a letter of support from the Oregon Ground Water Association regarding SB-5512. The Oregon Ground Water Association membership includes the men and women working in the field of ground water. More specifically the membership includes: consultants, hydrogeologists, engineers, water well constructors, geotechnical drillers, pump contractors, water treatment installers, and manufacturers and equipment suppliers to the industry. Our Association's purpose is centered on the proper protection and utilization of the resource. In order for our members to offer a proper service to the general public they need the type of raw data and information supplied from a variety of sources, the Department of Geology and Mineral Industry (DOGMI) being a key component. Our members primarily deal with the Oregon Department of Water Resources, but during the conduction of business they may interact with a variety of agencies including DEQ, DSL, CCB, OHA, OWEB, DLCD, and Dept. of Agriculture. In addition to these state agencies, many times our members also coordinate directly with local governments.

The Oregon Ground Water Association has always supported the collection of data so that all involved can make management decisions based on the best available science. In the case of DOGMI our members utilize the mapping provided to reduce the risk from locating in landslides, flood plains, and debris hazard zones. New mapping by DOGMI using Light Detection and Ranging (LIDAR) enables our members to offer the latest information to the public and thereby offer a greater protection to our natural resources. Our organization strongly supports the concept of better data management and universal access to the information. To this end we sponsored legislation (HB-3456 in 1993) that authorized a dedicated fund within the Water Resources Department for a one time use that would allow data to be moved from a paper format to a digital format. This process allowed the general public, realtors, and consultants from all areas of state to freely access the information. While the cost amounted to about \$700,000 this expenditure has paid for itself many times over. The efforts made by Oregon Ground Water Association are comparative to the requests being made by DOGMI to develop comprehensive geologic mapping that will allow equal access for all involved and we strongly support these efforts.

We are hoping that the Ways and Means committee will adopt a budget that will adequately fund this agency. Some guidance needs to be given so that base level funding can be established.

Jerry Schmidt
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Oregon Ground Water Association