



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF OREGON**

April 2, 2015

House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources
Rep. Brad Witt, Chair
Members of the Committee

Re: HB 3089, HB 3090, HB 3096, HB 3269; authorizing DOGAMI mining studies - OPPOSE

The League of Women Voters is a non-partisan, grassroots political organization that encourages informed citizen participation in government. We support policies that promote both conservation and development of land as a natural resource, in accordance with Oregon's land use goals. We oppose the four bills before you today, each of which authorizes the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) to conduct a study related to the mining industry.

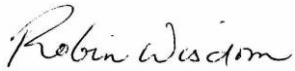
First, we question the need for conducting these studies. The language in the texts of HB 3089 and HB 3090 suggests a built-in bias and predetermined conclusions. The goal of HB 3089 is clear –to tie increased mining production to greater local revenues, which is especially attractive for eastern Oregon. How will this be efficiently achieved? The answer can be found in HB 3090, which authorizes a separate study on consolidating permit processes for mining activity, which will undoubtedly accelerate mining production but lead to fewer avenues for input from local government and citizens. The League believes that, due to the inherent conflicts that mining presents to those who live and work in a local community, there must be opportunities for citizen involvement at all stages of the process.


We also question two other assertions in Section 1 of these bills: reclamation efforts will greatly reduce the environmental impacts of mining operations, and the size and scope of modern operations do not cause interference with other natural resource uses. Although in recent years there have been advances in reclamation requirements and oversight, as well as increased scrutiny on environmental impacts, it is highly questionable whether most reclamation efforts achieve the goal of minimal interference.

HB 3096 and HB 3269 would require studies of mineral resource potential in Oregon. While the information gleaned in these studies may be valuable on a periodic basis, we feel that requiring these studies places an unnecessary burden on DOGAMI, especially the every odd-year provision of HB 3096.

Lastly, the League believes that these proposed studies are not a wise use of much-needed tax dollars. They would stretch the limited resources of DOGAMI and take away from its other important functions. These bills benefit one industry, offer one solution to a complex problem, and are not in keeping with the idea that natural resources should be managed as interrelated parts of the whole. We urge a “no” vote on these four bills.

Sincerely,


Robin Wisdom
LWVOR President


Marge Easley
LWVOR Action Committee

cc: Ian Madin, Interim Director, Department of Geology and Mineral Industries