

Senator Taylor, Representative Reardon, members of the Budget Committee,

DOGAMI staff would like to offer testimony in support of full funding of the Governor's recommended budget for the agency, including all Policy Option Packages. The agency has a demonstrated excellent record of providing critical information about geologic hazards, natural resources and essential regulation of surface mining. Our work protects the public, the environment and ensures an affordable supply of critical resources to Oregonians.

We ask the committee to look beyond this budget cycle and consider the future viability of this agency. Our experience working for DOGAMI extends back to 1987, during which time General Fund support for the Geologic Survey and Services program has steadily decreased. As those funds diminished, the agency sought Federal and other funds in order to fulfill its mission. That shift, while initially successful, now leaves the Agency continually on the edge of financial disaster. For several biennia, DOGAMI has been in the position of starting the biennium without knowing where it will find the necessary revenue to maintain staff and programs- programs that are integral to assisting with life safety, risk assessments, planning, and resource management. Most of the time we just squeaked by, with razor thin margins, but in 2015 we did not and this committee had to provide additional support to keep the agency afloat.

Structurally, nothing has changed since then. The Geologic Survey and Services program that provides Oregon communities with critical information about landslides, floods, the threat of Cascadia earthquakes and tsunamis, coastal hazards, lidar information, mineral and groundwater assessments is still completely dependent on securing dozens of competitive grants and contracts every biennium. If the program fails to secure one big grant, the program's finances could completely unravel. The only opportunity for cost savings would be to lay off staff, but those employees are the ones who find the funding opportunities and who have successfully written the grant and contract proposals. The demand for the unique services this program provides has never been higher, but the state stake in supporting those services continues to decline in real terms. If the information that this program provides is important to the people of Oregon, we ask you to support it with sufficient General Funds to ensure its long- term stability.

The Mineral Land Regulation and Reclamation program is intended to ensure that the drilling and mining for resources that are the foundation of our civilization be done with minimal adverse impacts on the public and the environment. Dependent entirely on fees from industry, this program has struggled to maintain a credible regulatory presence. We believe the current level of funding and staffing falls far short of what is needed to support a responsive and accountable permitting and enforcement system, a thorough and frequent inspection regimen, and a modern records management system. We urge you to support fully funding our agency and the vital services we provide.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Ian Madin, Jonathan Allan, Vaughn Balzer, Lowell Anthony, ReNeea Lofton, Ed Buchner, Cari Buchner

Note: This testimony was composed on personal time.