



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 99-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

March 21, 2019

To: Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources
Senator Kathleen Taylor and Representative Jeff Reardon, Co-Chairs
Members of the Committee

Email: jwmnr.exhibits@oregonlegislature.gov

Re: **SB 5511** – Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) Budget – **Support**

The League of Women Voters has a comprehensive position adopted in 1995 on Hazards, a part of which is:

The League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that all levels of government share the responsibility of coordinating, implementing and funding an effective program to mitigate Oregon's earthquake and tsunami hazards. Priority must be given to mitigation that protects human life and safeguards critical life support systems. When siting critical facilities, tsunami run up and inundation as well as seismic factors such as severe ground shaking, liquefaction, massive landslide potential, and subsidence should be considered.

Geological reports identifying property at risk should be on file and accessible to the public. Property that poses extreme hazards should be designated as unbuildable.

We also have strong positions in support of our land use planning program of which Goal 7, Natural Hazards, is an important element. There are critical linkages among agencies' duties regarding Oregonian's public safety regarding this very important issue. The Dept. of Land Conservation and Development has a role and the science received from DOGAMI is important guidance for local governments as they plan their communities. The planning discussion among agencies to address updating the 1995 tsunami line, for instance, which relates to sea level rise and climate change events, and what the state's responsibility is toward public safety, causes us to **support POP 090**.

The League believes DOGAMI's scientific information, particularly with the LIDAR program, is critical to good decision making in a variety of areas, both at the state and local level. Earthquake, Landslide and Coastal Erosion information are especially important for both public infrastructure siting and private investments. The use of DOGAMI's multiple data collection tools help make Oregonians safer. Because of that, **we support POP 102 to provide General Funds to continue this important work. Although the request is decreased, the \$1 million ask would provide important data to protect public safety and help increase our statewide coverage of this information.** In response to questions around increasing General Funds, the League wants to point out the need to stabilize the funding for our science personnel. The fluctuating grant funding was having an impact on personnel. There were fiscal issues that, with the role of DAS in that effort, have increased fiscal responsibility. The League has supported this General Fund investment because the science is so critical to public safety decisions.

The League continues to support funding for data collection in all natural resource agencies because accurate scientific data saves public monies and provides for good public and private planning and investments. During the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, for instance, data from DOGAMI informed that work. There are requests for increased investment in groundwater studies in the Water Resources budget this biennium. Yet the Dept. of Environmental Quality budget has staffing reductions for their portion of such studies. **We have got to expand these budget discussions to link programs and get out of these agency silos.** As an aside, since questions around dam safety arose during your recent hearing, the Water Resources Dept. is asking the legislature this session to update our dam safety policies and procedures to recognize that we have a number of high hazard dams which could affect the public's safety. (See **HB 2085** with amendments to come.) DOGAMI's role may well be providing the science around geologic stability, earthquake possibilities and tsunamis.

The League also supports efficiencies and streamlining of permitting processes so long as environmental protections are factored into final decisions. We are following the consolidated permitting process being used for the first time with the gold mine application of the Grassy Mountain area near Vale, OR. We will want to hear from both the agencies and the applicant at the end of this process to determine whether or not this was a positive process for both. For the League, it is important that the agencies' missions are being met while fairly adjudicating the outcome of the application. We believe that public policymakers (yourselves) should provide guidance to this agency to both provide industry development opportunities and protections for Oregon's environment. **The League is supporting SB 45, which will update the fee structure for the MLRR program. That increase will help address the deficiency in KPM #4.**

League members had a curiosity around hard rock mining in Oregon and have recently [completed a study of same](#). As with all our studies, we are now taking this information to all our members who will consider the information and develop "positions" upon which future League members may advocate.

DOGAMI is a small agency with a big public safety mission: to provide the science needed for policymakers to consider when making decisions to protect Oregonians. We encourage your support for this agency.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.



Norman Turrill
LWVOR President



Peggy Lynch,
LWVOR Natural Resources Coordinator

cc: Brad Avy, Oregon State Geologist and Director, DOGAMI (Brad.Avy@oregon.gov)