



ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL & ENGINEERING GEOLOGISTS

February 2, 2021

Dear Committee members,

We are writing to you as members of the Oregon Chapter of the Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists (AEG), a national organization of geoprosessionals formed in 1957 to support the practice of applied geology. Our geologists contribute to Oregon with teams of other professionals to build safe roads, bridges, buildings, evaluate site developments on hillsides or earthquake hazard areas, and clean up hazardous waste contamination. We are concerned for the safety of Oregonians resulting from underfunding the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI). As professional geologists, we can attest to the important role DOGAMI plays in our regular daily work. It enables us able to more efficiently obtain relevant and current scientific data that is independently prepared by a well-respected agency to make significant decisions regarding life and property that serve the people of Oregon.

One of DOGAMI's core missions is to "develop maps, reports, and data to help Oregon manage natural resources and prepare for natural hazards." DOGAMI provides regularly updated earth science information and guides regulation and reclamation of mining lands to make Oregon safe and prosperous. By providing high quality information for public reference, DOGAMI mitigates the risk of loss due to geologic hazards, such as landslides, flooding, tsunamis, and earthquakes. DOGAMI has worked diligently for the last several years to provide high resolution elevation and topography data from lidar technology. Detailed ground surface information from the lidar is critical to understanding geologic hazards. For example, maps published by DOGAMI are used to site schools outside of tsunami run-up zones in on the Oregon coast. They are also used for siting and protecting homes and transportation routes in landslide susceptible zones. And fundamentally, the continued development and creation of geologic maps is essential in understanding the nature of Oregon and our ability to protect ourselves and manage our resources. Without DOGAMI, Oregonians are more susceptible to development in undocumented geologic hazard areas that may lead to loss of life or property. The reduction in funding of DOGAMI will result in increased costs for exploration and development projects in Oregon due to additional effort required to generate scientific information typically prepared by DOGAMI.

In additional to helping prepare for future disasters, DOGAMI also assists during and after geologic disasters in Oregon, such as the 1993 Klamath Falls earthquake and the 2017 Eagle Creek Fire, to name just a couple examples. Data provided by DOGAMI will continue to be referenced as communities throughout Oregon rebuild from the devastating Labor Day fires of 2020. A rapidly moving landslide, or debris flow, in a part of the Columbia Gorge burned in the Eagle Creek Fire tragically resulted in a fatality this year. We have serious concern that underfunding DOGAMI, the department officially responsible for educating Oregonians on geologic hazards, will leave people more likely to rebuild in high-risk areas.

Having worked with multiple Departments of Geology in other western States, many of us can attest to the outstanding work of DOGAMI. This underfunded department routinely punches above its weight, to the long-

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term benefit of the Oregon public. DOGAMI is a national leader in landslide mapping and is used as a model for other state landslide hazard programs.

We understand that the COVID-19 pandemic is forcing difficult budget decisions throughout the state, at all levels of government. We strongly urge you not to address a short term need by putting Oregonians at long-term risk. We humbly request you restore funding for DOGAMI and, in fact, we hope you will work with the legislature to develop a sustainable, long-term funding plan for the department, so that it can continue doing its necessary work for the health, safety, and prosperity of Oregonians.

Respectfully Yours,

Mike Marshall, CEG
AEG Oregon Chapter Chair

Bryon Free, GIT
AEG Oregon Chapter Secretary

Aine Mines, PE, CEG
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AEG Oregon Chapter Past Chair