

February 2, 2021

Members of the Ways & Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

SUBJECT: DOGAMI BUDGET CONCERNS

Members,

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter. We are engineering geologist consultants who have a 2 person firm and have worked primarily in Oregon since 1990. We are extremely concerned about the potential restructuring of the DOGAMI GS&S and MLRR programs into DLCD and DEQ, respectively. We are glad to hear that the committee is now looking to alternatives for reorganizing DOGAMI as an entity.

These are our major concerns:

- We are very concerned that consideration has been given to eliminating the State Geologist position. How credible is the State of Oregon going to be perceived as the only state without a State Geologist when looking for future funding and grants associated with geologic hazards and mapping? There is also a huge value to the State of having a State Geologist in that he/she is a member of the Oregon State Board of Geologist Examiners which regulates licensure of geologists in Oregon and “assuring the safety, health, & welfare of Oregonians with regard to the public practice of geology”.
- We are also concerned about elimination of the LIDAR program. LIDAR is fundamental to mapping and locating geology hazards for not only State and Federal agencies but also for consultants like ourselves that use it on a daily basis.
- Landslides, debris flows, mud flows, earthquakes, faults, tsunami’s, flooding – these are just a few of the real everyday hazards that impact Oregonians. We are extremely concerned in the long run if DOGAMI lays off long term dedicated employees who are capable of analyzing these hazards. One person dedicated to one of these hazards, as is proposed, is not enough to adequately address these types of issues.
- State and local governments, fire, hospitals, emergency management services and geologic consultants all need the ongoing information from GS&S to prepare for any of these hazards, as they will continue to occur. With the recent fires in 2020, it is only a matter of time before rains will initiate debris and mud flows. The Cascadia future earthquakes will shake Oregon such that landslides, tsunamis and flooding will result in destruction of portions of our infrastructure, which will severely impact emergency services.
- MLRR has a strong team behind the program in the regulation of mine permitting in the State. Aggregate mining is the essence of infrastructure maintenance and future construction as sand, gravel and rock are the basics of concrete and asphalt. MLRR is primarily supported by fees from the mining operators. MLRR has done a superb job in

working with the mining industry to develop long term mining and reclamation of sites into secondary uses once mining is complete. Just a few examples of reclamation of mine sites include Bridgeport Shopping Center, Progress Quarry, Stafford Quarry – Street of Dreams, Salem and Albany ponds/parks. MLRR does a great job from their office in Albany, “if it’s not broke, don’t fix it”.

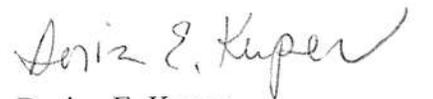
- As geologic consultants, we utilize the LIDAR, geologic mapping and risk analyses prepared by DOGAMI in our daily work. We also support the permitting of mining sites and design reclamation plans for the long term secondary uses of mine sites. We have worked with MLRR staff since 1990 and they as a team have a “can do” attitude in that they are solution driven.
- Maintaining the State Geologist position will give Oregon the credibility to go after a variety of funding that would not be available without a State Geologist. It appears from Mondays Committee meeting that the USGS is concerned about the future of DOGAMI and reluctant to fund studies under DOGAMI at this time (McKenzie River). There needs to be a clear, concise statement from the State of Oregon that supports the State Geologist and DOGAMI staff to show potential funding sources that DOGAMI is in this for the long term.
- With the recent fires and flooding and recent change in the Presidential administration, there may be more opportunities for funding for DOGAMI with an aggressive push by the State Geologist and Grant writer(s).

We implore the Subcommittee to consider DOGAMI as a whole agency and maintain a State Geologist position. Consideration of aggressively securing grants from a variety of sources in addition to Federal funding would support the agency not only financially but technically.

We appreciate your time in working with DOGAMI and solving the financial issues. This agency has staff that is responsive and dedicated. This synergy has taken years to evolve, please consider our comments and the future of DOGAMI.

Thank you,
Kuper Consulting LLC


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