

Statement in Opposition to HB 5010

Dear Co-Chair Taylor, Co-Chair Reardon and Members of the Natural Resources Subcommittee,

Staff reductions proposed by HB 5010 will cause natural disasters arising from our state's geologic hazards to fall more heavily on socioeconomically vulnerable communities — especially rural, tribal, coastal, and communities of color — for decades to come.

- The reduction of five geohazard staff positions to only one position will irreparably injure Oregon's response to seismic and other geologic hazards over future decades and will increase otherwise avoidable deaths in event of earthquake and landslides.
- The halving of coastal geologist positions will undermine the scientific authority of geologic information in precisely the area of the state where loss of life in a Cascadia earthquake will be in the thousands.
- The elimination of the Lidar coordinator and three geospatial analysis positions will eliminate a vital Lidar mapping project currently only half completed.
- Finally HB5010 proposes to eliminate a State Geologist, leaving Oregon the only state out of 50 and Puerto Rico without a State Geologist, a position held in Oregon since 1872.

DOGAMI should continue its essential environmental justice role going forward, due to its pivotal role in identifying the Critical energy infrastructure (CEI) hub as one of the very highest seismic risk locations in the State of Oregon. Failure of the CEI hub in an earthquake would harm, and perhaps even destroy, many historically Black neighborhoods in North/NE Portland by an overwhelming release of toxic pollutants and poisonous gases.

For eight decades, DOGAMI has been the most consistent source of unbiased, reliable, publicly available scientific information educating the public about Oregon geology. DOGAMI scientists and staff have served the public as board members, presidents, lecturers, and field trip guides for the past eighty-four of the eighty-six year history our organization, the Geological Society of the Oregon Country, the oldest collaboration of amateur and professional geologists in the Pacific Northwest. A petition in opposition to HB 5010 sponsored by our organization has received over 1,800 signatures.

Thus a vital, stand-alone DOGAMI with a strengthened environmental justice mission is essential to the safety of all in Oregon.

Paul Edison-Lahm
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Portland NAACP, Branch #1120
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