



March 10, 2023

Joint Ways & Means Committee Co-Chairs
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez,

On behalf of our business community, the Klamath County Chamber of Commerce is writing in support of Oregon Tech's emergency request for \$17.9 million to renovate the institution's unique geothermal heating system. This infrastructure is critical to Oregon Tech's continued operations, and therefore critical to Klamath County's economy and the success of our businesses.

Klamath County businesses and the Chamber of Commerce have a close relationship with Oregon Tech. We are lucky to all benefit from the use of geothermal energy in our downtown business district. Geothermal energy has been used since the 1960s to provide primary heating to the Klamath Falls campus and was the primary factor for locating the campus where it is today. Oregon Tech pumps hot water ($\approx 195^{\circ}\text{F}$) from below the earth's surface through multiple wells to a storage tank, where it then flows by gravity to various parts of the campus through both underground and tunnel-encased piping. The geothermal water is used to provide heating for campus buildings, snow melting for sidewalks providing ADA pathways, and domestic hot water. The geothermal resource is the only source of heating for most of the campus.

The existing geothermal wells and delivery systems are aging and experiencing multiple, repeated, single points of failure affecting critical student services and facilities. The critical nature of the system's current condition is a genuine life-safety risk with severe, immediate implications for student and employee safety and to the university's daily operations.

A thorough analysis performed by an engineering firm in June 2022 found \$14.9 million (\$17.9 million adjusted for inflation) in estimated repairs necessary to address immediate emergent and near-term life safety risks and to avoid imminent system failure, which would require campus closure, displacing students, staff, and impacting the economy of south-central Oregon.

Oregon Tech and our business community are inherently linked, and a closure, even temporary, of Oregon Tech would be devastating to our community.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and service to our state. I hope you are able to fund this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heather Harter', written over a white background.

Heather Harter, Executive Director
heatherh@klamath.org