



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission

Oregon Emergency Management

Mailing Address: PO Box 14370

Salem, OR 97309-5062

Phone: (503) 378-2911

Fax: (503) 373-7833

Date: February 1, 2021

To: Governor Kate Brown, Chairs Senator Kathleen Taylor and Representative Jeff Reardon,
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Natural Resources

From: Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Advisory Commission (OSSPAC)

Subject: HB 5010 - Letter of Support for DOGAMI

The mission of OSSPAC is to reduce the exposure of Oregonians to earthquake and tsunami hazards by improving public understanding of seismic risk, exposure and vulnerability, reducing and mitigating the possible effects of damaging earthquakes, and by reviewing and advising the Governor and Legislature on these issues. OSSPAC has grave concerns regarding HB5010 which proposes the eventual elimination of the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) as an independent, science-based agency. We strongly believe this bill jeopardizes the state's earthquake and other natural disaster planning and preparedness efforts.

DOGAMI's Scientific Value. DOGAMI's greatest value for all Oregonians rests in the work it performs in collecting and validating scientific data to enhance the state's resilience with respect to natural disasters. Eliminating DOGAMI as an independent agency and transferring most of its functions to two existing regulatory agencies that already have separate roles with respect to emergency planning will degrade the state's ability to manage natural disaster response and planning in the future.

Significant Collaboration. DOGAMI's critical scientific research is the cornerstone to past, present, and future resilience projects in Oregon. The agency's work is recognized nationally and internationally. Over the course of decades, DOGAMI has developed significant relationships throughout Oregon, which have resulted in many successful projects, such as:

- **Oregon Resilience Plan (ORP).** This living document is a seminal resource for focusing the state's resilience efforts. Since its release, countless stakeholders have relied on its findings and recommendations. In order for the Plan to remain relevant, continued support from DOGAMI is key as new information becomes available.
- **Regional Resilience Assessment Program (RRAP).** DOGAMI evaluated the vulnerability of multi-modal transportation routes across the State following a catastrophic earthquake. Federal officials relied almost exclusively on hazard data generated by DOGAMI to complete the study.
- **Tsunami Wayfinding.** DOGAMI collected historic data and developed the tsunami inundation base maps, which are a foundational resource for local planning. The agency also provides ongoing technical expertise to interpret the mapping data resulting in outreach efforts like "Beat the Wave" and "You Are Here" signage.

- **Oregon Coastal Hospital Resilience Project (OCHRP)**. Led by DOGAMI's seismic technical specialist, OCHRP was an innovative public-private partnership that began to address the seismic vulnerability of the 13 hospitals on the Oregon Coast.

Agency Stability. DOGAMI needs to remain intact as a scientific agency, and it needs stable funding with appropriate administrative support. Funding from grants and fees can offset these budgets, but these sources are variable, and the agency needs a base budget that accommodates and recognizes that variability.

Scientific expertise, experience and relationships must remain more constant for DOGAMI to be effective for the long term. Oregon citizens and agencies have made important progress with respect to natural hazards preparedness and mitigation, but still have a great deal of work to do. The State relies on DOGAMI as subject matter experts with respect to natural hazards.

OSSPAC firmly believes that DOGAMI has a critical role in developing a seismically resilient Oregon. Improving public understanding and mitigating the potential effects of damaging earthquakes is the responsibility of every Oregonian, but these efforts at all organizational levels rely on DOGAMI's scientific foundation for their success. For these reasons, OSSPAC urges reconsideration of HB5010 to maintain DOGAMI as a strong and cohesive scientific agency with stable funding and support.

Cc: Mike Harryman, State Resilience Officer
Amira Streeter, Office of Governor Kate Brown, Natural Resources Policy Advisor
Brad Avy, Director, Oregon Department of Geology and Minerals