



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 99-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

April 3, 2019

To: Senate Environment and Natural Resources  
Senator Michael Dembrow, Chair  
Members of the Committee

Re: **SB 45** – Updating fees for DOGAMI’s MLRR Division – **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon has a comprehensive position adopted in 1995 on Hazards. We also support state land use Goal 7 and regulations that address the mining industry.

In 2015, the mining industry stepped up to support an increase in fees to address serious fiscal issues with the Mining Land Regulation and Reclamation (MLRR) division. We acknowledge that support, although we also realize that it was in their interest to have a functioning MLRR program, and it does cost the industry. However, the Legislative Fiscal Office Budget Review acknowledges that the:

***“Department has found that the fee increases approved in 2015 and implemented in 2016 are no longer sufficient to cover both program and indirect costs beyond 2019-21 with the program fully staffed. The Department is proposing fee increases to better cover the costs of permitting, fund current activities beyond 2019-21, and to fund four additional positions described in POP 101. The program currently does not have capacity to conduct inspections on mine sites, which it had done in the past, although in a very inefficient manner that also contributed to permit processing backlog. Adding the three inspector positions will allow the Department to better meet its KPM #4 goal of inspecting 50% of all mine sites biennially (currently only 6.5% of mines have been inspected).”***

The budget request: ***“would fund four permanent positions (3.50 FTE) within the MLRR program. Three of the positions would be site inspectors, with the fourth position a half-time ISS-5 position to support the acquisition and maintenance of an electronic online permitting and inspection system. KPM #4 tracks the number of mine sites inspected biennial. Currently, MLRR has 865 surface mining operating permits, and over 1,000 different types of permit sites when including geothermal, oil and gas wells, but does not have the capacity to conduct site visits. The funding for this package is dependent on the approval of increases for the application, licensing and permitting fees received by the program.”***

The Legislature sets Key Performance Measures (KPM) to help gauge the success of each agency program. The public expects that regular mine inspections will occur. In order for the Dept. of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI) to meet KPM #4, we urge your passage of SB 45 and send it on to Ways and Means to support this important mission.

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

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