

# 2023 Legislative and 2023- 2025 Agency Request Budget Summary



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## Water Resources Department Legislation

### LC 554 – Establishing a Water Planning Fund

Provides authority to Department to create a new fund, the Water Planning Fund, for multi-purpose water planning grants to eligible entities to plan and prepare for their water future. The existing place-based planning authority sunsets July 1, 2023. The Department is working directly with local stakeholders on this concept.

### LC 549 – Split Season Instream Leasing

Provides authority to Department to issue split season leases beyond the existing 10-year cap. The authority for this existing provision sunsets on January 2, 2024. This concept repeals the sunset date and removes the provisions stating that land cannot be enrolled in this program for more than 10 years. This voluntary provision allows for the split season instream leasing for a water right holder to use water during part of the season, and then lease the authorized water right instream during remainder of the season in the same year.

### LC 553 – Transfers of Stored Water

This bill is a placeholder in the event that a solution is identified by the workgroup.

In 2021, ORS 540.510 and 540.520 (HB 3103) clarified the Department’s authority to approve character of use transfers on a stored water right. The legislation directed the Department to engage with a professional facilitator to work with stakeholders to identify the authority and draft policy solutions for transferring the point of diversion and location of use of storage right.

## Water Resources Department Agency Request Policy Option Packages

### Package 101 – Facilitate Interagency Work & Implement IWRS – \$371k GF; 1 FTE / 1 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 6.B, 9.B, 9.C, and 13.A

This package proposes to make a limited duration position from the 2021-2023 budget a full-time permanent position in order to effectively carry out and monitor implementation of the IWRS and its future updates, and ensure coordination and integration among the participating state, federal, and local agencies, as well as educational and non-governmental organizations.

### Package 102 – Addressing Agency-Wide Foundational Support Gaps – \$1.12m Total Funds (\$998k GF, \$122k OF); 3.01 FTE / 4 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 13.B

This package supports critical foundational staff that support the work of the Department: 1) more timely fiscal transactions from accounting staff and financial reporting from the fiscal team; 2) internal auditing; 3) employee development and retention; 4) public records modernization and support.

### Package 103 – ODFW Review and Scenic Waterway Revenue Gaps – \$694k Total Funds (678k GF; \$16k OF) – [IWRS](#) Actions: 10.G, and 13.B

This package would pay for costs incurred by WRD for ODFW fish related expertise as part of the water rights and extensions processes to complete reviews as well as the backlogged fish persistence work. In addition, this funding proposal will backfill the six existing split funded positions with general fund in the amount above the existing contracted amount with the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department for Scenic Waterway work. These positions are currently funded with a blend of Scenic Waterway funds and with general fund.

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### **Package 104 – IT Foundation, Modernization & Strategic Plan – \$1.5m GF; 4.77 FTE / 6 positions**

This package would include a number of investments needed to support expanded use of IT resources and the analysis and planning of modernization efforts, including following appropriate procedures established by the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) such as development of business cases for projects and increased oversight requirements around strategic planning, open data and information security.

### **Package 105 – American Rescue Plan Act Carry Over – \$15.9m OF**

This package proposes to carry forward American Rescue Plan Act funding authorized in the 2021-2023 budget in order for those efforts to be completed and have legislative desired outcomes be achieved. The federal requirements for these dollars state must be obligated by December 31, 2024, and expended by 2026 for the following: 1) place-based planning; 2) fish passage; 3) ordnance project in Umatilla County; 4) Well Abandonment, Repair, and Replacement Fund; 5) support fee based programs and engagement with stakeholders; 6) engineering services for flood methodology & inundation assessments; and 7) support surface water and groundwater data collection field equipment.

### **Package 106 – Water Planning Funding, Support, and Data – \$3.6m GF; 6.52 FTE / 9 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 5.B, 9.A, 9.B and 13.C**

This package would provide financial assistance for planning that helps communities understand water resources and water challenges, and then develop strategies or solutions to sustainably meet instream and out of stream water needs. In support of planning, this funding would be used for pre-planning work, community capacity building, integrated water resources planning, and implementation coordination of place-based plans. This package also proposes to fill critical gaps in information necessary for basins and regions to plan for their water future and pursue a more secure water future. This package requests additional staff resources tasked with developing a multitude of water supply analysis and tools to support future planning efforts. This is a companion POP to LC 554.

### **Package 107 – Feasibility Studies, Water Projects, & Wells – \$28m Total Funds (\$4.7m GF; \$22.4m OF; \$954k LF); 2.25 FTE / 4 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 5.B, 10.E, 13.D, and 13.E**

This proposal includes investment in several of the Department's funding programs, including, 1) Feasibility Study Grants; 2) Water Projects Grants and Loans; 3) Well Abandonment, Repair, and Replacement Fund; and 4) Harney Domestic Well Remediation Fund.

### **Package 108 – Water Rights and Protest Backlog Reduction – \$1.7m GF; 7.63 / 10 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 10.G and 13.B**

This package proposes to allow the Water Right and Transfer sections to keep reducing processing times and allows continued progress on the protest backlog. The package extends seven limited duration staff hired as a result of legislative actions during the 2021 session meant to reduce water right and protest processing backlogs and adds additional staff for providing outreach to applicants with recently approved permits or transfer orders and analyzing and modernizing the Water Rights Services Division's programs.

### **Package 109 – Adapting to Climate Change & Drought – \$1.7m GF; 5.78 FTE / 7 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 5.A, 5.B, 5.5A, 8.C, 10.A, 10.B, 11.D, and 13.C**

This package proposes six new positions that focus on climate change and drought response, mitigation and adaptation, improving the agency's instream programs, working with cities, districts, and others to promote water conservation, identifying potentially vulnerable water systems and working with the systems to improve their resiliency to water scarcity and drought, and Artificial Storage and Recovery/Artificial Recharge projects. This package also includes an administrative support position.

### **Package 110 – Centering Equity in Agency Programs & Policy – \$949k GF; 1.76 FTE / 2 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 8.B, 8.C, and 9.A**

This package proposes to fund two positions that would be responsible for leading the agency's efforts in advancing environmental and racial justice and diversity, equity and inclusion, as well as increasing the agency's capacity to reach

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underrepresented and underserved groups, including BIPOC and rural communities. In addition, the Department is seeking to hire a consultant to undertake a DEI assessment and to provide guidance and expertise to the agency. The assessment would explore the agency's current culture to understand what is working, and what could be different. Data collected will help to establish goals, objectives, and a baseline for DEI initiatives.

### **Package 111 – Water Use, Supply, and Availability Data – \$2.2m GF; 6.87 FTE / 9 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 1.B, 5.B, 9.C, and 13.B**

This package proposes to modernize several systems and datasets to ensure water allocation, management, and planning decisions consider current and spatially representative data. These data sets that support the Department's water allocation and management decisions are also fundamental for planning and funding eligibility (e.g., Federal drought payments). By hiring staff and establishing contracts, the Department can continue to improve and develop these datasets, establish additional monitoring sites, and make these data more easily publicly accessible. This work will also provide datasets supportive of the work proposed in POP 106 prioritized by communities doing water planning across the state.

### **Package 112 – Supporting Tribal Water Solutions & Relations – \$247k GF; 0.88 FTE / 1 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 9.C**

The Department proposes to add one position for Government-to-Government coordination, as well as to develop relationships with Tribes to better understand their interests and needs, and to partner in accomplishing shared water resources management objectives. This position would seek to provide more regular formal Government-to-Government consultation where desired, as well as to develop relationships with tribal staff and council members to increase mutual understanding and allow the agency to be a better partner.

### **Package 113 – Continuing Legislative Basin Investments – \$547k GF; 0.25 FTE / 1 position**

This package will carryforward the Columbia River Umatilla Solutions Task Force (CRUST) phase II work funded in the 2021-23 biennium and support administration of the Harney Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program to facilitate implementation of voluntary approaches to water use reduction in ways that minimize economic and cultural disruption in the basin.

### **Package 114 – Watermaster Staff: Improving Water Management – \$1.6m GF; 5.53 / 7 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 5.5B, 5.5C, 7.A, and 7.C**

This package is critically important to adapting water management to our changing climate, growing population, and increased water scarcity. This package would add a Region Manager for the Klamath-Lake County region; three field staff Klamath Falls office to assist with continued heavy workloads; one assistant watermaster in Burns to assist with workload in Harney and Malheur Counties, one Program Analyst to assist the Field Services Division with modernizing its programs and helping analyze and carry forward policy issues, and 0.25 FTE of a human resources assistant to handle hiring, onboarding, and HR issues. This package proposes to reclass 15 watermaster positions to address equity issues, water management complexity, program size, and an increase in job responsibility. This package also proposes to reclass one engineering position to address training, mentoring, retention, and succession planning in the dam safety program.

### **Package 115 – Supporting Resolution of Complex Issues – \$2.9m GF; 4.52 FTE / 5 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 5.B and 9.C**

The Department proposes to add three Natural Resource Specialist 5 Basin Coordinators and make permanent an existing Special Assistant to the Director to serve as a point of coordination for the Department as it works with parties involved in complex water management issues to assist in developing solutions, with work in the Southwest Region, North Central Region, East Region and Klamath/Lake Abert/Summer & Goose Lake Basin being a priority. These positions would complement the work of the existing positions that are currently focusing on the Northwest Region and Central Oregon. This package also includes a senior level water policy analyst that would be responsible for supporting the complex policy positions in their work and helping to carrying forward associated policy development and implementation necessary to carry out identified solutions.

### **Package 116 – Increase Engagement Through Communications – \$733k GF; 0.88 FTE / 1 position – [IWRS](#) Actions: 5.5A, 10.F, and 10.G**

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This proposal includes the addition of a communications professional to focus on further developing and implementing the Department's communications strategies for social media, video, newsletters, and graphics to reach, educate, and engage more Oregonians.

### **Package 117 – Assess and Inventory Levees – \$301k GF; 0.88 FTE / 1 position – [IWRS](#) Actions: 7.A and 7.C**

This package proposes the funding of one permanent Professional Engineer 2 (PE2) position to complete the inventory, condition assessments, and risk determinations for levees in Oregon. This inventory will be completed through both office and field work.

### **Package 118 – Understanding the Lake Abert Watershed – \$1.6m GF; 1.38 FTE / 2 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 1.B and 5.B**

The resources described here include additional data collection that would provide critical datasets to inform future scientific work and management conversations. The data collected would improve information in the watershed that would give the Department and basin stakeholders foundational data: 1) investments in Agrimet; 2) observation wells; 3) LIDAR; and 4) streamgages.

### **Package 119 – Studying Springs in Deschutes Basin – \$612k GF; 1.76 FTE / 2 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 3.A and 5.B**

This package proposes a study to address the following goals: 1) identify high-value ecological springs, 2) understand the sources and fluxes of water of high-value springs, and 3) understand the magnitude and causes of impacts on these sources and springs. The positions requested will work with existing WRD staff to complete the study, as well as the interagency coordination and stakeholder engagement necessary to identify springs and the habitat and ecological values.

### **Package 120 – Improving Data Accuracy and Availability – \$1.7m Total Funds (\$1.7m GF; \$3k OF); 8.17 FTE / 10 positions – [IWRS](#) Actions: 1.C and 6.B**

This package would include a number of investments needed to support efforts to enter, update, digitize and confirm agency data. Staff will perform both paper and computer-based quality assurance, make application and database programming changes specific to linking and relating program area data and perform physical visits of sites with missing or incorrect data. The programming and database changes will support the agency's effort to better leverage the value of data when combined and compared with and against other data sets from other program areas. In the end this work will make great strides in improving agency data quality, availability, efficiency and result in better data-based decision making.