

Oregon State Legislature dedicates \$50 Million in funding for irrigation modernization projects across Oregon.

The funding will support major improvements to aging infrastructure, benefiting agriculture, rural communities, and conservation efforts in Oregon.

The Oregon State legislature approved funding available in the 2023-2025 state budget dedicated to helping irrigation districts take advantage of the recent surge of federal funding available for water infrastructure projects and meet cost-share requirements for federal programs. To ensure projects are related to irrigation modernization, one of the key requirements to access this funding is that districts need to be approved for funding from one of three federal programs, which includes the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations (WFPO), Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) WaterSMART and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Community Grants.

The state's \$50 million investment is a great acknowledgement of the work that has been performed by Oregon Water Resources Congress, Energy Trust of Oregon, Farmers Conservation Alliance, and many other partners throughout the state. Agricultural irrigation entities across Oregon are actively pursuing irrigation modernization projects to update or replace aging infrastructure ranging from 75 to 150 years old. These modernization projects will increase water reliability, support community renewable energy development, reduce operation and maintenance costs, and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

"This historic investment will help catalyze efforts by irrigation districts to modernize agricultural water infrastructure and increase resilience to drought and water scarcity. I applaud the Oregon legislature for including targeted match funds in the 2023-2025 budget, which will ensure our State can leverage unprecedented federal funding and support innovative projects throughout Oregon that may otherwise not occur," said April Snell, Executive Director of the Oregon Water Resources Congress. "This funding is a critical step towards securing Oregon's water future and will provide a multitude of benefits for generations to come."

"Thank you to Representative Ken Helm, Representative Mark Owens, and their staff for advocating for these dollars during the legislative session. These funds will give the state a huge competitive advantage in unlocking hundreds of millions of dollars in federal conservation dollars," said Julie O'Shea, Executive Director of Farmers Conservation Alliance, "our irrigation district partners have shovel ready projects that have been waiting for this kind of opportunity."

"Irrigation modernization sets up Oregon irrigation districts, farmers and rural communities for long-term stability," said Dave Moldal, senior program manager of renewable energy at Energy Trust. "It also creates opportunities for installing in-conduit hydropower generation, opening up new revenue streams for districts and their patrons."

The state's \$50 million fund will be generated through lottery bonds and will be administered through the Water Supply Development Account at Oregon Water Resources Department. You can read the legislative text by clicking on this [link](#). The irrigation funding is in Section 10, which starts on page 5 of the document.

The Oregon Water Resources Congress (OWRC) is a nonprofit trade association representing irrigation districts, water control districts, drainage districts, water improvement districts and other agricultural water providers across the state of Oregon. Our district members deliver water to ~600,000 acres of farmland state-wide, over 1/3 of all irrigated land in Oregon. OWRC has been promoting the protection and use of water rights and the wise stewardship of water since 1912. Learn more at www.owrc.org

Formed in 2005, Farmers Conservation Alliance (FCA®) is a nonprofit organization based in Hood River, Oregon that realizes agricultural and environmental benefits through the modernization of irrigation systems. Irrigation modernization is one of the greatest agricultural, environmental, and local energy development opportunities in the western United States. Learn more at www.FCAolutions.org

Energy Trust of Oregon is an independent nonprofit organization dedicated to helping utility customers and communities benefit from saving energy and generating renewable power. Our services, cash incentives and energy solutions have helped participating customers of Portland General Electric, Pacific Power, NW Natural, Cascade Natural Gas and Avista save \$5.3 billion on energy bills. Learn more at www.energytrust.org