

## ANALYSIS

### Item 31: Department of Agriculture Seafood Processors Pandemic Assistance

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**Analyst:** John Terpening

**Request:** Approve the submission of a federal grant application to the U.S. Department of Agriculture in the amount of \$1,532,089 to provide relief to seafood processors who have incurred costs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Analysis:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agriculture Marketing Service made \$50 million funding available to the states to reimburse seafood processors for expenses incurred in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The amount of funding USDA is providing to each state is based on the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's 2019 seafood landings data. For Oregon, the expected grant amount is \$1,532,089. The funding would allow the Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) to reimburse seafood processors, facilities, dealers, and processing vessels for costs related to personal protective equipment, facilities renovations, quarantine, marketing, or other related expenses incurred between January 27, 2020 and December 31, 2021.

The grant application deadline is November 22, 2021. The grant is non-competitive and does not require a match. The funding will be provided to one agency within each state and ODA will be collaborating with the Department of Fish and Wildlife on implementation of the grant. The agency will utilize existing personnel to review processor applications and distribute the available funding.

**Recommendation:** The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means approve the request.

**Request:** Authorization to apply for a grant totaling \$1,532,089 from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agriculture Marketing Services Seafood Processors Pandemic Response and Safety Block Grant program to support seafood processors in response to Coronavirus impacts.

**Recommendation:** Approve the request.

**Discussion:** This grant program provides funding to eligible state agencies to provide relief to seafood processors who have incurred costs due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. One award will be made to each eligible state. The grant is non-competitive and does not require matching funds. Of the \$50 million nationwide relief funding available, Oregon is eligible to receive approximately \$1.5 million. The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) would use awarded funding to reimburse Oregon seafood processors for investments made to continue operations during the pandemic. The grant application is due on November 22, 2021. If the grant is awarded, ODA may return to a future Legislative meeting to request additional expenditure limitation, as needed.



**OREGON  
DEPARTMENT OF  
AGRICULTURE**

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October 15, 2021

The Honorable Senator Elizabeth Steiner Hayward, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Senator Betsy Johnson, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Representative Dan Rayfield, Co-Chair  
Interim Joint Committee on Ways and Means  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

**Nature of the Request**

The Oregon Department of Agriculture (ODA) requests permission to apply for a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agriculture Marketing Service (AMS) Seafood Processors Pandemic Response and Safety (SPRS) Block Grant. USDA will award grants to eligible state agencies to provide relief to seafood processors, including processing facilities, dealers, and processing vessels who incurred costs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Grant guidelines require that applicants be state agencies, commissions, or departments in eligible states that are responsible for agriculture, fisheries, wildlife, seafood, commercial processing, or related commerce activities within the state. AMS will make only one award to each eligible state. Once each state has received their award and is prepared to distribute funds, seafood processors must apply to the state agency for direct assistance. The grant application deadline is November 22, 2021.

The grant is non-competitive. State grant allocations were determined using National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) 2019 landings data to distribute funds proportionally. There is \$1,532,089 available for Oregon and the grant does not require a match.

**Agency Action/Background**

USDA AMS has made \$50 million in relief funding available specifically to reimburse seafood processors for expenses in response to COVID-19. USDA determined the value of state-specific block grants based on landings data compiled by NOAA. The block grants are

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available to a single government entity in each awarded state; and ODA is taking the lead to implement this grant with collaboration from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW).

The grant will allow the state to reimburse Oregon seafood processors for investments in personal protective equipment, facilities renovations, quarantine, marketing, and other COVID-19-related expenses incurred between January 27, 2020 and December 31, 2021.

**Action Requested**

The ODA respectfully requests permission to apply for a USDA AMS Seafood Processors Pandemic Response and Safety Block Grant Program.

**Legislation Affected**

If the grant application is successful, ODA may return to the Legislature for increased federal funds expenditure limitation if ODA is not able to accommodate the grant within existing budget authority.

Sincerely,



Alexis M. Taylor, Director  
Oregon Department of Agriculture

