

## ANALYSIS

### Item 38: Department of Energy Columbia Basin Restoration

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**Analyst:** Wendy Gibson

**Request:** Allocate \$228,315 General Fund from the Emergency Fund and establish one permanent full-time position (0.54 FTE) for the Columbia River Basin Restoration Initiative.

**Analysis:** In December 2024, the federal government, the states of Oregon and Washington, and four Columbia Basin Tribes (Nez Perce, Yakama, Umatilla, and Warm Springs) reached an agreement to stay ongoing litigation regarding hydropower dam operations on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. The agreement, known as the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative (CBRI), binds the parties for ten years and includes over \$1 billion in federal funding to restore and protect native fish populations while replacing energy, transportation, and irrigation services in the basin.

Implementation of the agreement is underway, with many details still to be determined. The signatories, including the State of Oregon, agreed to establish a formal structure for the implementation with a centralized position from each signatory to coordinate and facilitate the efforts. The CBRI agreement impacts several state agencies, including the Oregon Department of Energy (ODOE), Department of Transportation, Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Water Resources Department.

ODOE, on behalf of the Governor's Office, is requesting the establishment of a permanent position to fill the centralized CBRI coordination role. The position would be funded through ODOE and reside in the Governor's Office. The submitted request is for 0.54 FTE, or 13 months of position authority in the 2023-25 biennium, which equals a start date of June 1, 2024. A reasonable assumption, however, is that a minimum of one month will be necessary to certify the position authority and hire the incumbent, resulting in an FTE increase of 0.50. Adjusting the start date to July 1, 2024, reduces the 2023-25 biennial cost of the position and associated services and supplies funding to \$222,407 General Fund. The estimated cost for the 2025-27 biennium is \$451,355 General Fund.

Biennium	Classification	Pos Count	FTE	Position Cost	Services & Supplies	Total General Fund Cost
2023-25	Consultant Advisor 2	1	0.50	\$210,751	\$11,538	\$222,407
2025-27	Consultant Advisor 2	1	1.00	\$421,506	\$23,077	\$451,355

**Recommendation:** The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends that the Emergency Board allocate \$222,407 General Fund from the Emergency Fund to the State Department of Energy, and authorize the establishment of one permanent position (0.50 FTE), to support statewide coordination of the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative.

**Request:** Allocate \$228,315 from the State Emergency Fund to establish one permanent, full-time position (0.54 FTE) for the Columbia River Basin Restoration Initiative.

**Recommendation:** Approve the request.

**Discussion:** The Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative is an agreement between Oregon and Washington, the Nez Perce, Yakima, Warm Springs, and Umatilla Tribes for the restoration of healthy and abundant native fish populations with considerations to potential dam removals in the Lower Snake River. The Initiative includes the oversight of over \$1 billion to address Lower Snake River Restoration. The focus will be on restoring salmon, steelhead, and other Native fish, minimizing rate pressure, securing affordable, reliable, climate-resilient energy, securing services to replace services of the Lower Snake River dams, and continued stakeholder engagement.

To fulfill Oregon's duties under the initiative, the Department of Energy (ODOE) is requesting the establishment of one Consultant Advisor 2 position (0.54 FTE) to act as liaison between state and external partners and provide policy coordination within the executive branch related to the Initiative. The position will work with the Governor's Office providing collaboration between state agencies and other Columbia Basin Initiative partners.

**Legal Reference:** Allocation of \$228,315 from the State Emergency Fund to supplement the appropriation made by chapter 451, section 1(1), Oregon Laws 2023, for the Oregon Department of Energy, Energy development services, for the 2023-25 biennium.



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



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April 29, 2024

The Honorable Senator Rob Wagner, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Representative Julie Fahey, Co-Chair  
State Emergency Board  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Co-Chairs:

## **Nature of the Request**

The Oregon Department of Energy request position authority for the creation of a permanent full-time Consultant Advisor 2 position to work within ODOE in coordination with the Governor's office to oversee implementation of the Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative in coordination with multiple natural resource agencies.

## **Agency Action**

The Columbia Basin Restoration Initiative (CBRI) is an agreement between the U.S. government, Nez Perce, Yakama, Warm Springs, and Umatilla Tribes, and the states of Washington and Oregon to provide over \$1 billion in funds for salmon restoration and clean energy production along the Snake River. This agreement was established in December 2023 and filed in federal district court.

The state of Oregon has an important role in working with the Federal government and regional partners to implement the CBRI agreement, which aims to restore healthy and abundant salmon, steelhead, and other native fish populations in the Basin, to secure a clean and resilient energy future for the region, to support local agriculture and its role in food security domestically and globally, and to invest in the communities that depend on the services provided by the Columbia River System.

Governor's Office staff, with technical advice from ODOE and other state agencies, leads the implementation of the CBRI agreement with the Federal government and the other members of the Six Sovereigns. The CBRI agreement sets forth certain timelines for completing regional analyses and coordination among the parties and stakeholders relating to meeting regional energy, transportation, and water needs, as well as critical restoration activities. An additional position is necessary to fulfill the terms of the CBRI agreement, including coordination among state agencies and engagement with regional partners. While ODOE will continue to provide technical assistance as necessary, the agency does not have staff capacity to adequately support coordination and oversight of Oregon's implementation of the CBRI agreement.

This position will provide oversight and coordination of state agencies in meeting the obligations of the CBRI agreement, serve as a liaison to the Federal government, Tribes, Washington, and other interested parties on Columbia River Basin matters, and provide the Governor with policy analysis and advice. Housing the position at ODOE will help ensure that energy expertise and perspectives inform the state's work on these issues.

**Action Requested**

ODOE requests the establishment of a 0.54 FTE full-time permanent Consultant Advisor 2. ODOE also requests a General Fund allocation of \$228,315 and corresponding limitation increase to fund the position.

**Legislation Affected**

HB 5016



Janine Benner, Director

cc: Sione Filimoehala, CFO  
Wendy Gibson, LFO