



# 2021-24 Legislative Investment Update

Interim House Agriculture, Land Use, Natural  
Resources and Water

Ivan Gall, Director

December 11, 2024

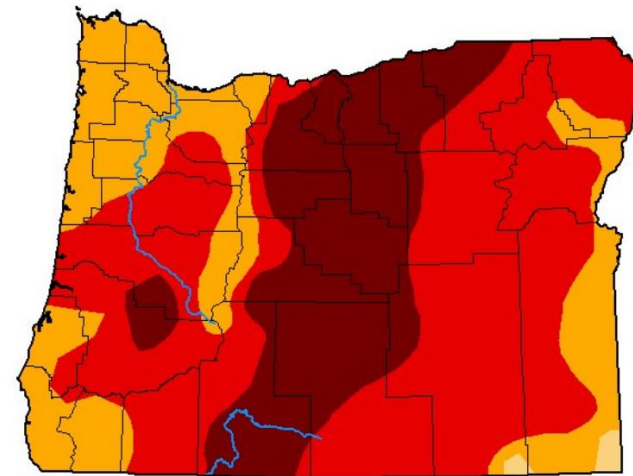
# Agenda

- Where is Oregon today
- Overview of 2021-24 investments
- Select Investment Area Updates
  - Planning and Partnerships
  - Data and Analysis
  - Water Distribution and Public Safety
- A strategic path forward

# An Era of Water Scarcity

- Prolonged drought conditions
- Increased demand
- Limited “new” water
- Increasing complexity

## U.S. Drought Monitor Oregon



**September 14, 2021**  
(Released Thursday, Sep. 16, 2021)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT

Drought Conditions (Percent Area)

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
<b>Current</b>	0.00	100.00	100.00	99.34	76.69	26.59
<b>Last Week</b> 09-07-2021	0.00	100.00	100.00	99.08	76.69	26.59
<b>3 Months Ago</b> 06-15-2021	0.00	100.00	98.99	77.03	36.90	4.78
<b>Start of Calendar Year</b> 12-29-2020	8.57	91.43	83.53	68.71	27.74	0.00
<b>Start of Water Year</b> 09-29-2020	6.50	93.50	84.77	65.53	33.59	0.00
<b>One Year Ago</b> 09-15-2020	6.33	93.67	83.70	64.18	31.84	0.00

### Intensity:

None	D2 Severe Drought
D0 Abnormally Dry	D3 Extreme Drought
D1 Moderate Drought	D4 Exceptional Drought

The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. For more information on the Drought Monitor, go to <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/About.aspx>

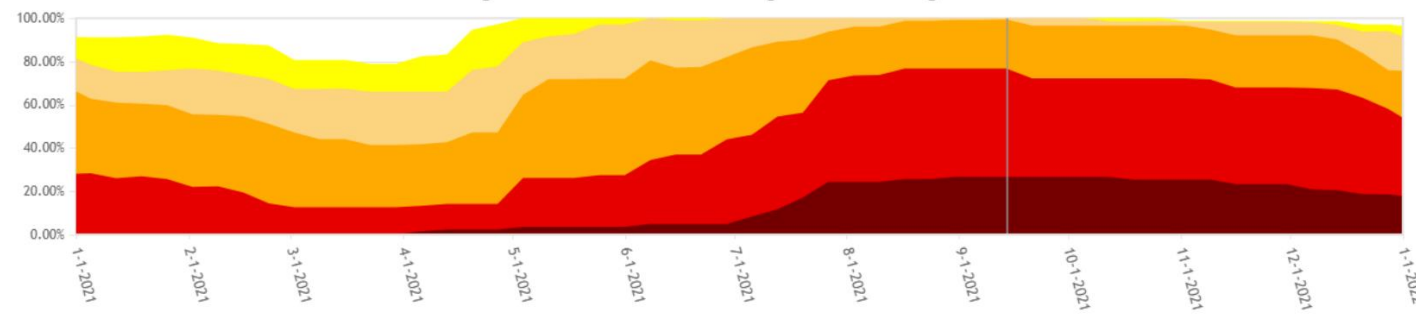
### Author:

Brad Rippey  
U.S. Department of Agriculture



[droughtmonitor.unl.edu](https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu)

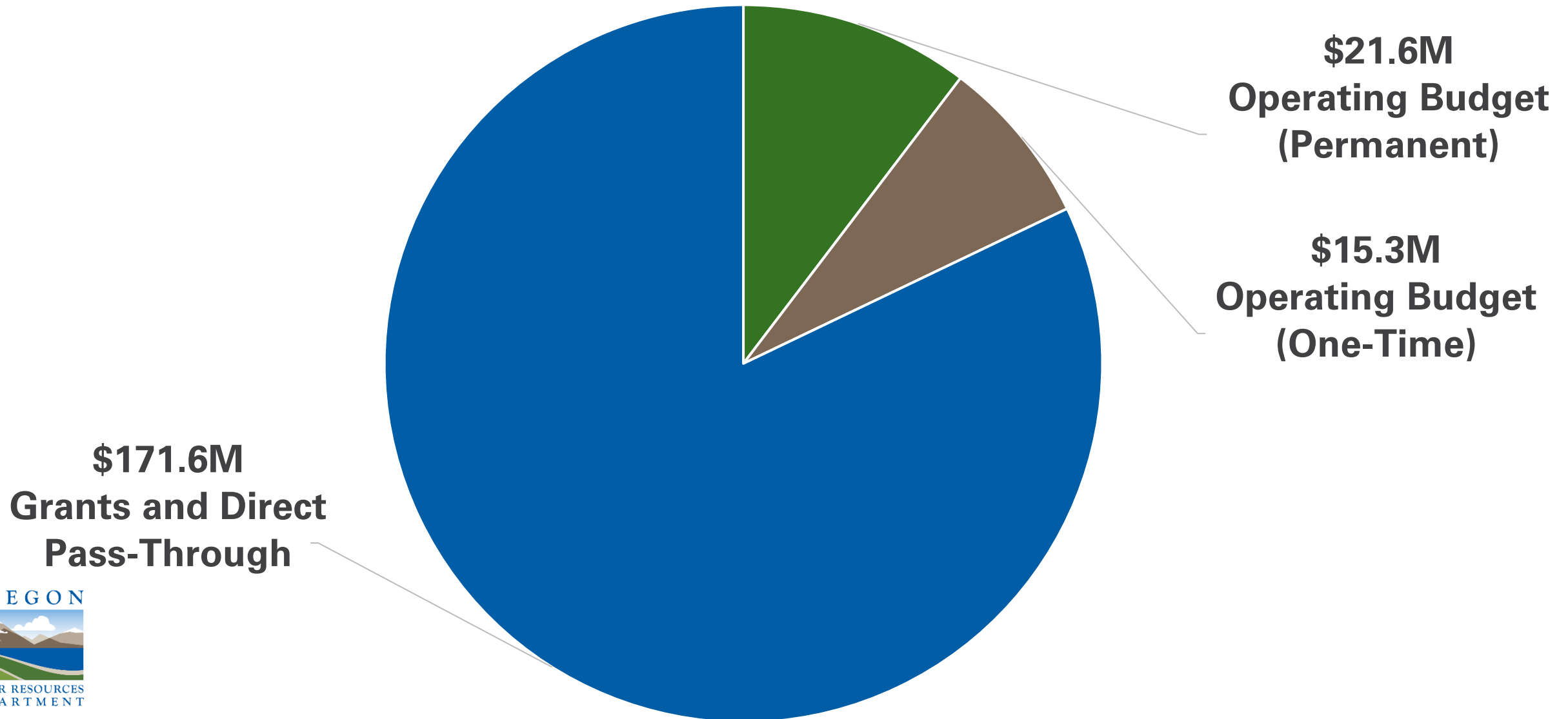
Oregon Percent Area in U.S. Drought Monitor Categories



# OWRD Budget At a Glance

	2019-21 Legislatively Approved (1/2021)	2021-23 Legislatively Approved (9/2022)	2023-25 Legislatively Approved (2/2024)	2025-27 Current Service Level
<b>General Fund</b>	\$35,217,839	\$74,089,805	\$88,114,428	\$80,870,715
<b>Other Funds including Fees</b>	\$14,413,830	\$39,453,906	\$40,381,452	\$18,203,884
<b>Other Funds - Grants/Loans</b>	\$85,849,252	\$86,142,341	\$139,200,425	\$107,400,000
<b>Lottery Funds - Debt Service</b>	\$7,563,194	\$9,499,510	\$14,102,838	\$24,352,512
<b>Federal Funds</b>	\$1,148,011	\$1,119,017	\$2,153,385	\$2,190,179
<b>Total Funds</b>	\$144,192,126	\$210,304,579	\$283,952,528	\$233,017,290
<b>Positions / Full-Time Equivalent (FTE)</b>	178/172.67	241/216.82	259/248.71	248/245.25

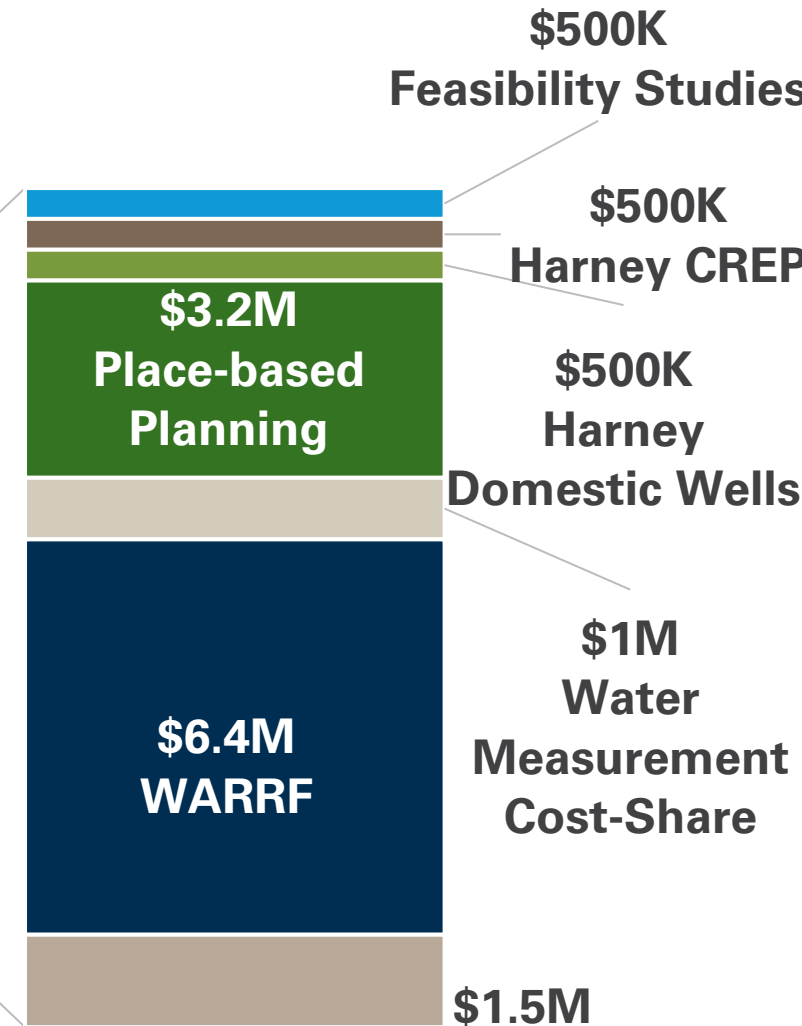
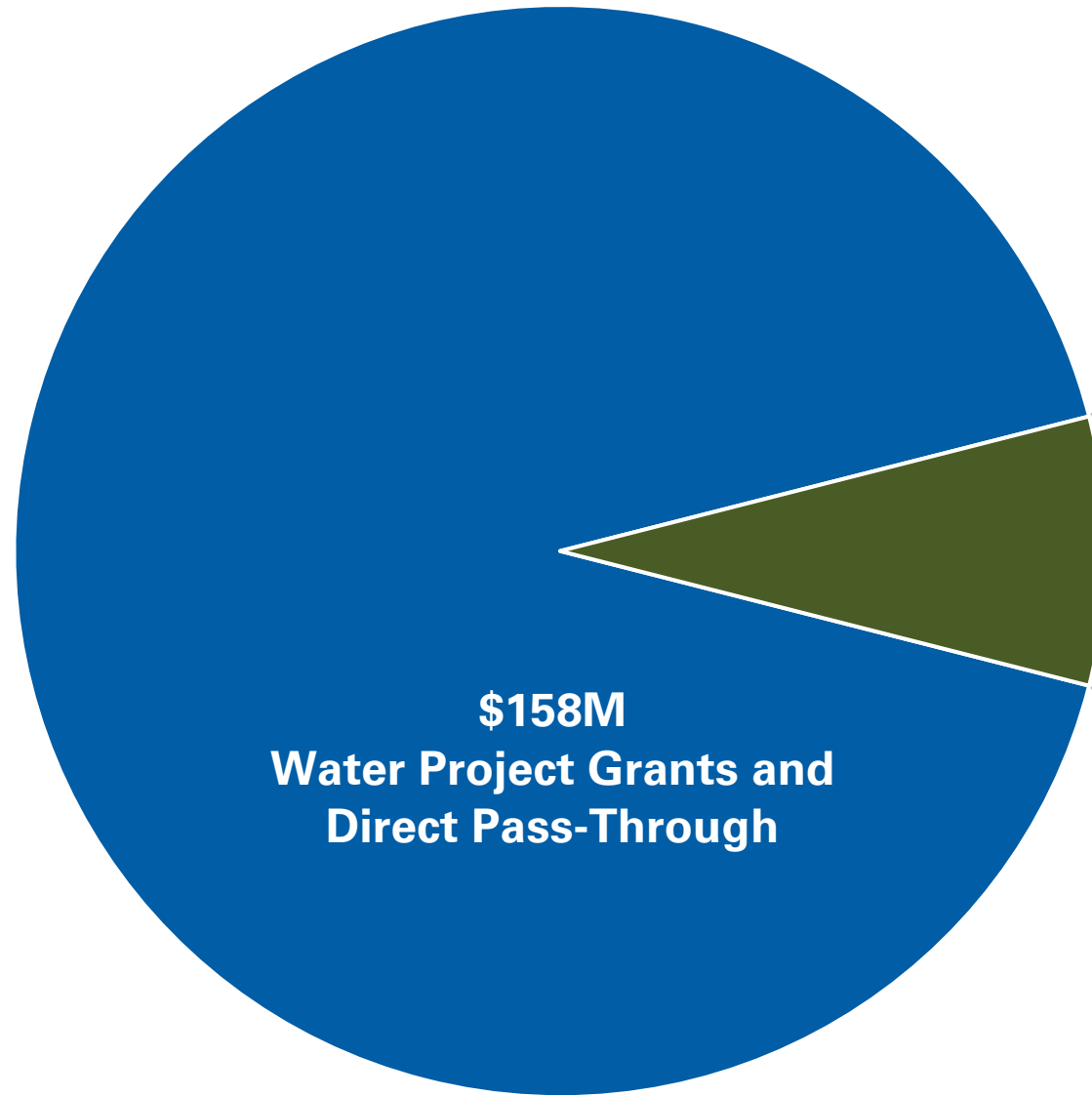
# \$208.5 million in new legislative appropriations between 2021-2024



# Legislatively Approved Grant Funding 2021-24

**\$171.6 Million Total Funds**

\$126.7 million  
obligated via  
370 grant  
agreements



# General Areas of Investment\*



**Planning and  
Partnerships**



**Surface and  
Groundwater Data and  
Analysis**



**Water Distribution and  
Public Safety**

# Planning and Partnerships

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*Oregonians working together to plan for our sustainable water future.*



2021: OWRD Budget POP 111, 113; HB 2018; HB 5505

2023: OWRD Budget POP 101, 106, 114

# Integrated Water Resources Strategy

- 2017-23 Progress Report
- 2024 IWRS Update and Action Prioritization: **In progress (2025 completion)**
  - Prevent things from getting worse
  - Optimize: Highest and Best Use
  - Help Communities Prepare and Adapt

## 2017-2022 Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy

### Progress Report

Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy (IWRS) provides a statewide inter-agency framework for better understanding and meeting Oregon's instream and out-of-stream water needs. Oregon's Water Resources Commission adopted the first IWRS in 2012 and the second in 2017. The 2017 IWRS provides recommendations in 13 different issue areas. Each issue area includes multiple recommendations, resulting in more than 50 recommended actions.

Requirements for multi-agency involvement, document adoption, and update frequency are outlined in ORS 536.220. Although the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) is the lead agency for developing and

updating the IWRS, they work in close cooperation with other agencies, stakeholders, and the public.

ORS 526.220 states that the IWRS is to be updated every five years. This Progress Report is intended to summarize progress made to date in achieving the recommended actions outlined in the 2017 IWRS and to help inform the next IWRS update.



Clean water restoration plans developed for **5,000** miles of impaired streams and **187,000** acres of impaired water bodies

**\$19.4** million provided by ODA to farmers and ranchers for 2021 natural disaster assistance



**2024**  
Oregon's Integrated Water Resources Strategy

Draft 1, March 2024



**+2,000**  
Individual participants

# Collaborative Capacity

- Engaging communities in different basins while developing engagement and technical tools for agency use statewide
- Policy and Technical Guidance
  - Best Practices for Community Engagement Rulemaking: In progress (out for public comment)
  - Place-based Planning Fund Rulemaking: In progress (out for public comment)
- Exploring options for elevating planning and collaboration within the agency

# Surface and Groundwater Data and Analysis

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*Foundational information to make wise decisions and pursue innovation.*



2021: OWRD POP 110; HB 2018; Federal American Rescue Plan Act  
2023: OWRD POP 111; HB 2010

# Building Water Knowledge and Datasets

- State Recharge Study – In progress (2028 completion)
- First comprehensive use dataset (evapotranspiration)
- Groundwater studies for a complete understanding of the basin
  - Harney: Completed
  - Walla Walla: In progress
  - 15-Mile Creek: In progress (scoping and public engagement)

+11,000  
Measurements  
and samples  
annually

35  
New  
Agrimet  
Weather  
stations

30  
New  
observation  
wells

10  
New  
stream  
gages

# Improving Sustainable Water Management

- 68% reduction in groundwater review backlog
- Water management tools
  - Water Availability Reporting System Update: **In progress (2030 completion)**
  - Modernizing water data infrastructure
- Policy Work
  - Critical Groundwater Area and Groundwater Allocation: **Completed\***
  - Malheur Lake Basin Rules: **In progress**
  - Voluntary groundwater agreements: **In progress**

# Water Distribution and Public Safety

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Increased capacity to support field presence and enforcement and protect public safety through dam safety and well construction.



2021: OWRD POP 101, POP 109; HB 2145; Federal American Rescue Plan Act  
2021 Special Session: SB 5561  
2023: OWRD POP 114

# Managing and Distributing Water

- Increased field presence to manage water, investigate unauthorized water use and improve customer service
- **Newly established:** Enforcement Section
  - Streamlining field and enforcement
- Strategic staff placement and structure



# Improving public safety of Oregon's dams and communities

- Improved resiliency to climate related flooding and seismic events for 900+ dams
  - 2 statewide studies
  - Funded engineering assessments, design and rehabilitation work for 50+ private and publicly owned dams
- 76 High Hazard Dams (HHD)
  - Inspected annually
  - Technical assistance for Emergency Action Plans (EAP)

↑49%  
Annual  
Safety  
Inspections

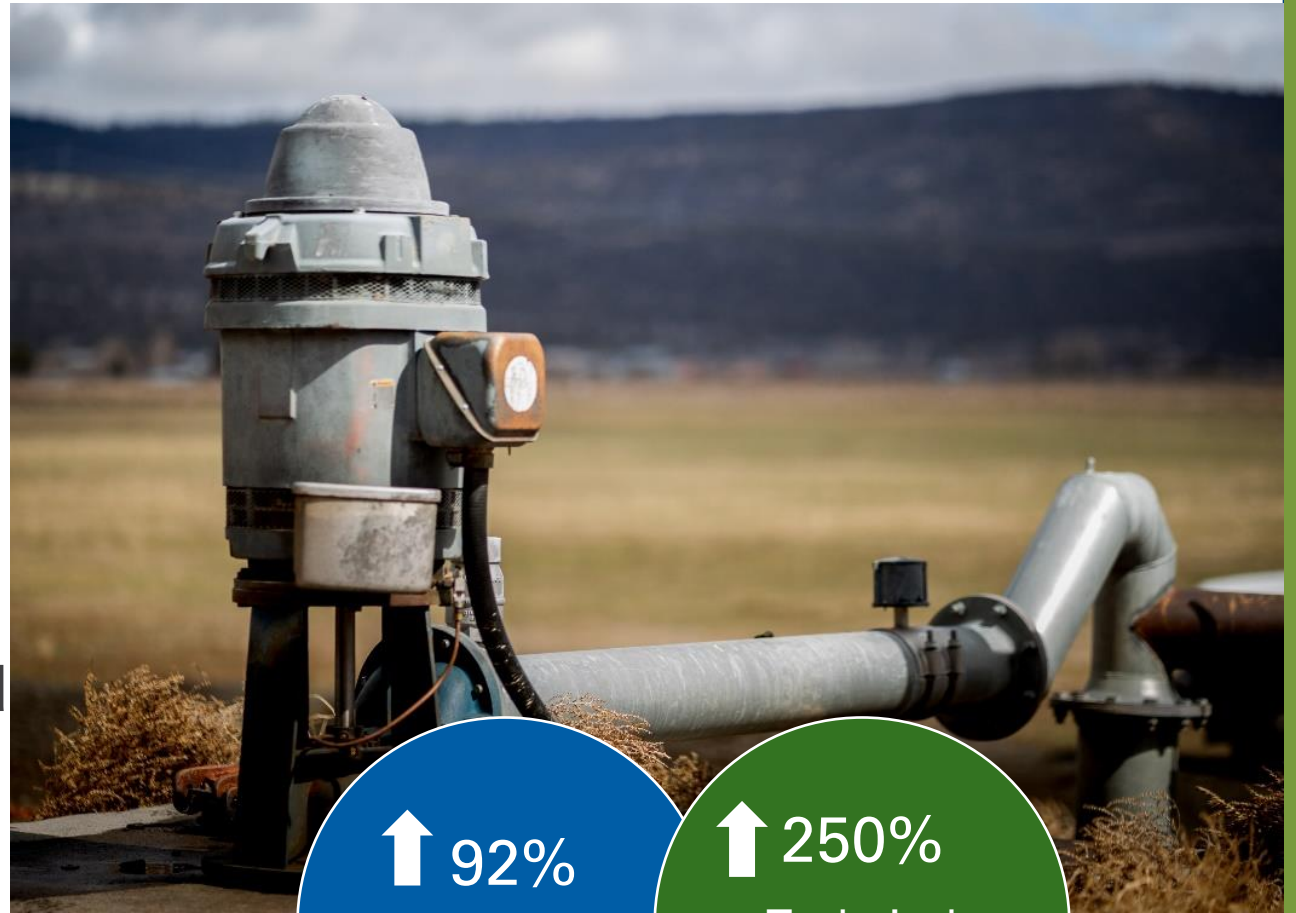
100%  
Completion  
of HHD  
EAPs

8x more  
Annual  
HHD EAP  
exercises



# Protecting public health and groundwater through proper well construction

- 2 rulemakings to modernize program: **Completed**
- Proactive ID of construction deficiencies
- IT modernization systems to improve customer service (unfunded)
- Increased communication and collaboration with drilling community



↑ 92%  
Well  
inspections

↑ 250%  
Technical  
well log  
reviews

# Other successes

- Drinking water restored to **204 homes** via Well Abandonment, Repair and Replacement Fund
- Protest referral **increased > 250%** (with increased resources)
- **7 rulemakings** completed or initiated with **60** rule advisory committees, informational sessions and public hearings
- IT Strategic Plan completed
- Employee recruitment, retention and onboarding planning and improvements

# The Challenges: 2021-24 Appropriations

- Over 40 new projects to implement
  - 5 new funding opportunities to stand up
- Filled 226 positions (277 recruitments) since August 2021
- Pass-through funding is difficult to manage
- Uneven distribution of investments
  - Temporary investments provide temporary solutions
  - Some unfunded requirements
  - Staff reductions to Water Rights Services Division that process water right transactions

# A Strategic Path Forward

- Modest and strategic investment will be critical to maintaining sustainable growth
- Customer service improvement
- Implement IWRS via work plans
- Update of Strategic Plan
- Project management capacity
- More work to be done

OREGON



WATER RESOURCES  
DEPARTMENT

# Thank you!

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[Oregon.gov/owrd](https://Oregon.gov/owrd)



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