

Idaho

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Resource Board, said a line item in the federal infrastructure bill President Joe Biden signed in November allows a state's Rescue Plan Act money to be used as the non-federal match in a Reclamation project.

The board last summer prioritized 20 projects worth about \$843 million. They include raising Reclamation-owned Anderson Ranch Dam and building a large aquifer-recharge project in the Upper Snake River Valley.

"We need to look at this ARPA money and the rules around it and see what we can do for water projects that are going to last the next 50, 60 years," said House Agricultural Affairs Committee Chairman Clark Kauffman, R-Filer.

\$1.6 billion surplus

Lawmakers must also decide how to spend a state general fund surplus of \$1.6 billion, driven by state sales and income tax revenue that is higher than expected.

Paul Arrington, Idaho Water Users Association executive director and general counsel, said he expects lawmakers to focus on lasting benefits, as in 2021.

"And so what we are looking at is how can we address some of our needs to have sustainable water supplies into the future, whether that be additional recharge, storage infrastructure like Anderson Ranch or even fixing or modernizing our existing delivery infrastructure," he said.

Treasure Valley Water Users Association Executive Director Roger Batt said he expects infrastructure needs to be combined into a Water Resource Board appropriation. If an appropriation is approved, the board's plan to spend it may include matching grants such as those found in the state's flood-management program.

"As the population continues to grow, there will be additional pressures on water," said Russ Hendricks of the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation. Increasing the capability to store and use water before it leaves the state would be beneficial in the long term, he said.

Rep. Rick Youngblood, R-Nampa, who co-chairs the budget-setting Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee, said a sizable gain in the state's population is fueling growth in the state's general fund. Meanwhile, federal one-time pandemic funds have helped pay for immediate needs.

He said budget writers are identifying revenue sources "to not spend dollars that are one-time on ongoing needs." In spending federal Rescue Plan Act funds this year, for example, "we want them to be identified for one-time capital projects."

Little, in a June 3 memo to agency directors, said except for the public school budget, agencies should not exceed last year's general fund appropriation by more than 3.1%.

Budget requests

Some agency requests will impact agriculture and forestry budgets.

Rob Sepich, budget and policy analyst for the Legislative Services Office, said the Department of Lands proposes to add full-time fire personnel and increase starting firefighters' pay. The Department of Water Resources is also requesting additional staff for water-rights work such as adjudications.

The state Department of Agriculture wants to move employment at its invasive-species check stations from seasonal and temporary to full-time.

At its Center for Agriculture, Food and the Environment, the University of Idaho Agricultural Research & Extension Service seeks to hire an operations manager, a research support scientist and an extension 4-H educator focused on science, technology, engineering and math.

For the fiscal year that started July 1, the state general fund budget is about \$4.22 billion. Tax collections through November were more than 13% ahead of forecasts, the Division of Financial Management reported.

The \$11.2 billion overall budget, including federal funds, is 46.6% higher than a year earlier due to federal coronavirus aid, the Relief and Economic Security Act and ARPA funding, said Keith Bybee, the Legislative Services Office Budget and Policy Division manager.

State budget surpluses often prompt tax-relief proposals.

Meat: Administration has claimed industry structure is keeping down prices for cattle producer

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and poultry processors, strengthening rules to protect farmers, enforcing existing antitrust laws and bringing greater transparency to cattle markets, he said.

The North American Meat Institute, however, contends government intervention in markets won't help consumers or livestock producers.

For the third time in six months, Biden and the administration have announced the same plan to fund government intervention in an attempt to increase prices for livestock producers while blaming inflation on private industry, said Julie Anna Potts, the Meat Institute's president and CEO.

"The Biden administration continues to ignore the number one challenge to meat and poultry production — labor shortages," she said.

"Press conferences and using taxpayer dollars to establish government-sponsored packing and processing plants will not do anything to address the lack of labor at meat and poultry plants and spiking inflation across the economy," she said.

"The administration wants the American people to believe that the meat and poultry industry is unique and not experiencing the same problems causing inflation across the economy, like increased input costs, increased energy costs, labor shortages and transportation challenges," she said.

The administration has claimed industry structure is keeping down prices for cattle producers, conveniently ignoring the fact the beef industry has changed little for almost 30 years. Prices reflect supply and demand, the Meat Institute said.



EO Media File

The Oregon Capitol in Salem.

Oregon

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The overtime issue has been presented as a "racial equity agenda item," but in reality, ending the exemption wouldn't put more money into farmworkers' pockets, she said. "It's just not going to be the result because our members can't afford to pay more wages."

Proponents of ending the overtime exemption seem to believe farmers can just raise their prices, when they'd actually be forced to limit employee hours to contain labor costs, said Jeff Stone, executive director of the Oregon Association of Nurseries.

"Clearly, we need to use different words because they don't understand the price-taking side of ag," he said.

Timber compromise

Another major natural resource proposal before Oregon lawmakers will be the compromise deal between environmental groups and the timber industry, under which logging



Lauren Smith



Jeff Stone

buffers near streams would be expanded.

The agreement would also restrict logging below steep slopes to prevent sediment from reaching streams and implement other changes in the forest practices law.

The "private timber accord" was negotiated with help from Gov. Kate Brown's office. It is anticipated to receive a "rubber stamp" from lawmakers in 2022.

"This is a legislative priority and has all the ingredients to pass," said Cooper, adding that the Oregon Farm Bureau is still studying the proposal. "I have a hard time seeing a situation where it doesn't go forward."

Certain aspects of the accord, such as increased regulations for beaver removal in forests, have made the Farm Bureau nervous about the implications for agriculture.

"It could be a reason to adapt that policy to other lands," said Lauren Smith, the group's director of government affairs.

The Farm Bureau also plans to advocate for the resumption of a program under which private landowners pay an assessment to raise money for predator control by USDA's Wildlife Services. The program was allowed to sunset during the previous legislative session after animal advocates opposed extending it.

"There doesn't seem to be an avenue for our communities to manage predators," Smith said.

Climate legislation

There's likely to be action on climate legislation, if Democratic lawmakers try to enshrine an emissions reduction plan from the state's Department of Environmental Quality in law, Stone said.

"I expect there will be a bill to codify whatever the Climate Protection Plan rules say," he said. "I'd be surprised if the majority did not try to push something through legislatively."

Other issues

Farm groups will probably lay the groundwork for future legislative proposals by initiating discussions about real estate tax reform and water storage, he said.

County tax assessors sometimes differ in what they consider taxable real property, such as stationary equipment for greenhouses and seed cleaning, Stone said. The goal would be to make those rules uniform.

As for water supplies, a grant program created several years ago is largely focused on efficiency and hasn't been used to develop water storage facilities, as intended, he said. "That needs to be taken down to the studs and rebuilt."

In light of the politically charged atmosphere and the governor's race, it's likely that agriculture will have to fend off "just plain stupid" proposals intended to score points with certain voters, Stone said.

"2022 I would hope it would be boring, but I fear it may not be," he said of the session. "I just don't want anything truly harmful to get any oxygen during a short session."

Washington

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the current budget.

"Sometimes it's been true, people have looked at supplemental budget years as quiet months in Olympia. It cannot be quiet months in Olympia this year," Inslee said. "It may be a short session, but it is a long list of crises that requires us to act with urgency."

Tax collections are exceeding forecasts. Inslee has rebuffed a Republican invitation to use some of the unexpected revenue to cut taxes.

The governor cautioned "those who get stars in their eyes" and think the money

will keep pouring into state coffers.

"The need for expenditures (is) going to go on, but the revenues are going to go away," he said.

Even if the private-sector economy cools, the Inslee administration can look forward to new revenue sources.

The capital gains tax took effect Jan. 1. The state estimates it will collect \$442 million when tax bills are due April 2023.

The Washington Farm Bureau and others are suing to overturn the tax. The suit remains in Douglas County Superior Court. The state Supreme Court ultimately will rule on the tax's legality.

Also in 2023, manufacturers must start bidding

for the right to emit greenhouse gases. The cap-and-trade auctions are expected to bring the state \$220 million the first year.

Inslee did not propose raising taxes, but it's possible the Legislature will consider raising the gas tax and other transportation-related fees.

'Crisis' proposals

For the "climate crisis," Inslee proposes spending \$626.5 million.

For the "salmon crisis," he proposes \$187 million.

The salmon plan includes \$8.4 million for the state Department of Fish and Wildlife to set and enforce "riparian-protection zones."

Although the buffers

would take land out of agricultural production, the governor's office did not include farm groups in developing the proposal.

"We don't do things that way in Washington — at least we didn't use to," said Jay Gordon, policy director for the Washington State Dairy Federation.

Inslee has proposed banning natural gas in new buildings by 2034. His climate agenda includes \$100 million for electric vehicle rebates.

He also proposes to set aside \$100 million for solar projects by tribes, electric utilities, schools, local governments, state agencies, housing authorities and nonprofit groups.

Glyphosate: China is the world's No. 1 glyphosate supplier

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"It's all over the board," said Johnson.

Some factors are broad supply chain issues: clogged ports, too few containers, labor shortages, COVID-19 disruptions and reduced packaging supplies.

Other factors are specific to the industry.

China is the world's No. 1 glyphosate supplier, exporting about 80% of its supply — and China's industry has faced multiple challenges.

In 2020, floods hit one of China's major glyphosate manufacturers, causing a significant supply gap.

New policies and restrictions in China, related to energy use and COVID, further slowed

production. In August of 2021, Bayer Crop Sciences, a major U.S. manufacturer, had to shut down its glyphosate-manufacturing plant in Luling, La., for five weeks after Hurricane Ida.

Finally, phosphate mining, a key part of production, has faced recent disruptions, and there's a reduced supply of inert, or inactive, ingredients.

Johnson, of Purdue, advises farmers to take steps to prepare for the 2022 growing season.

First, he said, farmers should contact their supplier to find out what volume of each herbicide the supplier can guarantee.

For example, if the supplier can only guarantee 60% of the usual volume, the grower will need to plan ahead for the best, most targeted use.

Johnson said growers should also explore alternatives, which may mean moving to a tillage system or using targeted rather than broad-spectrum herbicides.

Although Johnson said the glyphosate shortage will be a challenge, he encourages growers to see the silver lining.

This crisis, he said, presents an opportunity for growers to learn, or re-learn, how to identify weeds and incorporate other control methods rather than relying on broad-spectrum products.

"The silver lining, from my perspective, is that we'll become a lot more knowledgeable," he said. "And inadvertently, we may also help slow down weed resistance to glyphosate."

Johnson encourages farmers to create "plans B, C and D."