

WRP 2025-27 OPERATING BUDGET REQUESTS:

Water Rights Processing. \$1,280,000, 4.6 FTEs. Processing water right applications has become increasingly challenging due to intensified competition for limited water resources across the state, along with the growing legal, scientific, and technical complexities involved in water right decisions. Consequently, the number of water right permit decisions made by Ecology each year has dropped by more than 45% compared to a decade ago. Without additional funding, the backlog of pending water right applications and processing times will continue to rise. Ecology is annually, which will support economic development and also protect the environment. (General Fund-State)

Drought Planning and Preparedness. \$2,000,000, 1.7 FTEs. Washington is experiencing significant impacts from climate change, including threats to its snowpack, infrastructure, and water supply, as droughts become more frequent and temperature extremes more common. To address these challenges, Ecology used one-time funding from the 2023-25 operating budget to launch a pilot program offering competitive grants for drought planning and preparedness. These grants aim to help communities and agricultural users stabilize water access before emergencies arise. This request seeks to secure ongoing funding to continue and expand this grant program for both drought planning and preparedness projects. Related to implementing Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy. (General Fund-State)

Water Management and Compliance. \$702,000, 2.3 FTEs. The waters of the state are publicly owned, and Ecology grants rights to use specific volumes of water for designated purposes in particular locations under the "prior appropriations" system. Once these water rights are issued, Ecology manages water users to safeguard senior rights, including instream flows. This management involves watermasters who track water use and enforce compliance through active oversight. Ecology is requesting funding to increase watermaster staff in Eastern Washington and the Walla Walla Basin to enhance water use management, ensure adherence to state water laws, and bolster Washington's resilience to climate change impacts. Related to implementing Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy and Governor's Salmon Strategy update. (General Fund-State)

Water Resource and Climate Resilience. \$1,895,000, 4.5 FTEs. Washington State's water supply is increasingly affected by climate change, with reduced snowfall, earlier snowmelt, and diminished summer streamflow. As salmon and other aquatic life face shrinking water resources, competition intensifies between people and wildlife. Addressing the impacts of climate change and population growth on our environment and water supply is vital for developing solutions that serve all users. Ecology seeks funding and additional staff to enhance climate resilience, strengthen instream flows, and ensure statewide water security. Related to implementing Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy. (General Fund-State)

OCR and WRP 2025-27 CAPITAL BUDGET REQUESTS:

Columbia River Water Supply Development Program. \$57,884,000. Ecology is seeking \$57.8 million in new appropriation authority to advance the Columbia River Basin Water Supply Development Program (Chapter 90.90 RCW). This funding will support ongoing projects and provide the Office of Columbia River with the resources needed for significant progress in the 2025-27 biennium. Specifically, the funds will: offer alternative water sources for agricultural users in the Odessa Subarea aquifer; supply new water for pending applications; ensure reliable water during droughts; develop new municipal, industrial, and irrigation water; and place about one-third of these supplies in-stream to support fish, wildlife, and recreational needs. Related to implementing the Governor's Salmon Strategy and Washington's Climate Resilience Strategy. (State Building Construction Account, Columbia River Basin Water Supply Revenue Recovery Account)

Yakima River Basin Water Supply. \$59,000,000. The existing water resources infrastructure, programs, and policies in the Yakima River Basin are insufficient to meet the basin's environmental and economic needs, including aquatic resource support, fish and wildlife habitat, dry-year irrigation, and municipal water supplies. To address these challenges, local stakeholders developed the Yakima River Basin Integrated Water Resources Management Plan, which outlines a comprehensive, long-term approach to water resource and habitat improvement. Ecology is requesting \$59 million for the 2025-27 biennium to advance this plan in collaboration with the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation and local partners, aiming to bolster the regional economy and safeguard the environment. This request is directly related to implementing the Governor's Salmon Strategy. (State Building Construction Account)

Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District Water Conservation. \$3,320,000. The U.S. Bureau of Reclamation oversees conservation improvements required by the Sunnyside Division Water Rights Settlement Agreement in the Yakima Basin Water Rights Adjudication. Ecology is seeking additional funds to cover the 17.5% state match for these multi-year projects. The Sunnyside Valley Irrigation District Phase 2 project is estimated at \$80 million, with Ecology's share totaling \$14 million over an 11 to-15-year period. This request includes \$3.32 million for Phases IIE and IIF to support the construction schedule for the Yakima River Basin Water Enhancement Project during the 2025-27 biennium. Related to implementing the Governor's Salmon Strategy. (State Building Construction Account)

Streamflow Restoration Program. \$40,000,000. Ecology is seeking \$40 million to advance the Streamflow Restoration Program established under Chapter 90.94 RCW. Enacted in 2018, this law authorizes \$300 million in bonds over 15 years to fund local watershed planning and projects aimed at enhancing instream flows across the state. With this funding, Ecology will provide additional water supplies to improve flows for fish and wildlife. This request is directly related to implementing the Governor's Salmon Strategy and the Puget Sound Action Agenda. (Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Bond Account, Watershed Restoration and Enhancement Taxable Bond Account)