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Emergency Board approves additional COVID-19 and wildfire relief funding

SALEM – Today, the Legislative Emergency Board approved millions of dollars in emergency funding to support Oregonians impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Labor Day Wildfires. This is the 13th meeting of the Emergency Board since March 2020.

This follows action taken during the third special session of 2020 on December 21, when the Legislature voted to move \$400 million into the state’s emergency fund for critical pandemic-related programs that will support Oregonians in the first few months of 2021, as well as \$100 million to provide more support for Oregonians impacted by the Labor Day wildfires.

“Our state has faced constant crises for the last 10 months, and legislators of the Emergency Board have acted swiftly and thoughtfully to help Oregonians who desperately need help,” House Speaker Tina Kotek said. “Entering the 2021 legislative session, our focus will not waver. We will put people first and do the work necessary to support all Oregonians impacted by these catastrophes.”

“It is a new year but Oregon and her people are still hurting,” Senate President Peter Courtney said. “Today, we sent relief to Oregonians hit by the virus and the fires. I am proud of the Emergency Board's work. The session is right around the corner. We must work hard to help Oregonians.”

Below is a summary of the actions approved by the Emergency Board:

Pandemic Relief

- \$324 million in federal funds for grants to school districts and for staff to meet the education needs of responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- \$116 million in federal funds for emergency rental and utility assistance to Oregonians from the December 2020 Congressional stimulus package.
- \$100 million to fund a commercial rent relief program.
- \$46 million to the Oregon Community Foundation to provide continued support to the Worker Relief Fund and the Quarantined Worker Fund, and the creation of a Small Enterprise Fund for small business assistance.
- \$19 million to the Oregon Health Authority for the public health response to COVID-19.
- \$15 million to assist residential and day camps that provide school-age child care and other services.
- \$12 million for community behavioral health providers.
- \$9 million for grants of \$1 million each to Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes for needs arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated economic hardships.
- \$7 million to fund a temporary rate increase for Aging and People with Disabilities nursing facilities; \$3.4 million to fund a temporary rate increase for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities programs; and \$1 million to the Runaway and Homeless Youth program to help providers facing service delivery challenges due to COVID-19.
- \$932,112 for response to the COVID-19 pandemic public health emergency for emergency student financial aid and for the Student Daycare program child care grants.
- \$250,000 for an ombudsman program to address COVID-19 related investigations and complaint mitigation in the state's prison system.
- \$135,000 for grants to two community organizations that will educate renters about Oregon's eviction moratorium.

Wildfire Relief

- \$36.75 million for wildfire debris removal.
- \$31.5 million to provide shelter, food, and wraparound services to Oregonians impacted by wildfires.
- \$25 million for a grant to the Housing Authority of Jackson County to acquire and develop property to replace a portion of lost workforce housing destroyed during the Labor Day wildfires.
- \$14.28 million for the state's wildfire recovery, prevention, and preparedness activities to fund the state's remaining estimated net cost for the 2020 fire season.
- \$13 million for the state's wildfire recovery, prevention and preparedness activities to the Oregon Department of Forestry to supplement the wildfire aviation program, increase fire program staffing, and expand the partnership and planning program, including federal forest health programs.
- \$4 million for the state's wildfire recovery, prevention and preparedness activities to the Department of State Police, Office of the State Fire Marshal for wildfire response and preparedness.
- \$2 million for the establishment of a municipal wildfire financial assistance program

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