



JOINT COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS

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Press contacts:

Connor Radnovich, connor.radnovich@oregonlegislature.gov

Jill Bakken, jill.bakken@oregonlegislature.gov

Health, Safety Prioritized in Budget Rebalance Bill

State resources will support wildfire recovery and prevention, foster children, patient care, and services for the elderly and people with disabilities

SALEM, Ore. – Today, the co-chairs of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means released [Senate Bill 5550](#), which will distribute \$425.6 million in general fund resources as part of the normal process of balancing and closing the books on the 2023-2025 budget.

The majority of the funds in the budget rebalance bill are directed toward the Oregon Health Authority and the Oregon Department of Human Services. Rebalancing these agencies happens in every biennium. This cycle, both agencies saw higher caseloads and more utilization of services than had been projected in fall 2023, and the additional revenues will help ensure these agencies can continue to provide necessary services through the end of the biennium.

OHA will receive \$197.6 million to support staffing levels and in response to growing caseloads within the Oregon Health Plan and Healthier Oregon Program.

ODHS rebalance totals \$161.4 million, driven in large part by a 9% increase in services within the Aging and People with Disabilities office due to a pent up post-pandemic demand, while certain more-expensive services also saw an uptick in use.

An additional \$10 million will be sent to DHS for the prevention of temporary lodging of foster children.

"We are prioritizing the health and safety of Oregonians and supporting the state agencies that do the hard work of providing services to some of the most vulnerable among us," said **Sen. Kate Lieber (D-Beaverton)**, co-chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means. "Budgets are documents that should reflect our values."

SB 5550 also increases expenditure limitations and pulls down \$1.2 billion in federal funds, the majority of which are matching dollars for OHA and OHDS (\$646.9 million and \$501.4 million, respectively).

Additional allocations include:

- \$6 million for 2025 wildfire season prevention and pre-positioning to the Department of the State Fire Marshal.
- \$5.5 million from dedicated education funds fulfilling a commitment to support 2020 wildfire-impacted schools.
- \$5 million for the disaster preparedness stockpile to the Oregon Department of Emergency Management.
- \$4 million for court interpreters to the Oregon Judicial Department.
- \$2.9 million for increased legal costs to the Department of Environmental Quality and Water Resources Department.
- \$250,000 for domestic well testing in Crook County to the Department of Environmental Quality.
- \$50,000 to the Legislative Policy and Research Office to contract with a third party for a management review of the Oregon Department of Transportation. The review will be presented to the Legislature during the 2025 session.

The process for assembling the budget rebalance bill involves a series of meetings between the Ways and Means Committee co-chairs, Ways and Means subcommittee chairs, Legislative Fiscal Office, and state agencies where agencies are asked to explain their budget requests in great detail.

“The rebalance of the 2023-25 biennium includes adjustments for state agencies delivering services directly to Oregonians. Now we are focused on delivering a balanced 2025-27 budget in a state economy that is stable, but facing uncertain federal headwinds,” said **Rep. Tawna Sanchez (D-Portland), co-chair of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means.**

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