

Community-Initiated Projects for Oregon Included in the Fiscal Year 2026 Senate Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Bill

1. **\$2 million for the Farmers Irrigation District to convert remaining sections of open canal into buried irrigation pipelines in Hood River County.** This project will contribute to improved habitats for native fish species, water conservation, and sustained agricultural production.
 - "Farmers Irrigation District is grateful for Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden's support for project funding. This will allow the District to enclose the last 2.5 miles of our main canal, which will increase water security for local farmers and improve watershed resiliency," **said Alexis Vaivoda, Farmers Irrigation District Manager.**
2. **\$2 million to North Unit Irrigation District for the next phase of its irrigation modernization project.** Funding will be used toward converting over 27 miles of open-ditch irrigation canals with gravity-pressured buried piping, which will significantly reduce water loss, improve water delivery reliability, and improve streamflow in the Deschutes River.
 - "With drought conditions returning to Jefferson County, it makes clear the urgency and need for funding to implement projects that improve water security for our district," **said Josh Bailey, general manager of North Unit Irrigation District.** "Proactive action by Senators Merkley and Wyden to support this important project will protect our farms, communities, and environment from further impacts due to water shortages."
3. **\$2 million for the Idanha-Detroit Rural Fire Protection Fire District to help construct a new fire station.** This will include additional sleeping quarters, training areas, adequate storage for EMS and firefighting supplies, and lead to an overall increase in the effectiveness and responsiveness of first responders.
 - "The Idanha-Detroit Fire District is beyond grateful to Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden for their work in championing this request and getting us this much needed funding! Our small rural fire district has very limited financial resources. This funding will allow us to finish building our new fire station that is a replacement building for the fire station we lost during the Labor Day 2020 Beachie Creek Wildfire. The new fire station is an essential structure needed to protect and serve the residence and visitors to the Idanha and Detroit communities," **said Brandon Hamilton, President of Idanha-Detroit Fire District Board of Directors.**
4. **\$648,000 to Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) for the construction of a new community center.** Wheeler SWCD's current facility is insufficient to support the public's needs as the county's leading natural resource agency. This new space will be a centrally-located innovation hub for multi-agency accessibility to best support Wheeler County's natural resources work while promoting intra-agency collaboration.
 - "As a conservation district, daily discussions surround the increased demands for climate change mitigation, natural resource conservation, reduced environmental impacts and improved economic stability," **Wheeler Soil and Water Conservation**

District Manager Cassi Newton said. “With this funding and the expertise of many partners, we plan to use SWCD property overlooking the John Day River for the development of a mass timber constructed multi-agency community center with locally sourced timber and juniper from Wheeler County to serve as a hub for conservation agencies that will provide much needed modern office, conference, education, and training services that is centrally located in the exceptionally rural district/county.”