

Overview of the 2021 Legislative Session

Columbia River Policy Advisory Group
June 3, 2021

Today's Agenda

- Overview of the 2021 session
- WR bills that passed
- Budget
 - Overview
 - Provisos



The 2021 Session

- “Long session” and budget year
- All virtual, little in-person activity
- The numbers:
 - **1,448** bills introduced
 - **335** bills passed
 - **178** bills tracked by Ecology
 - **9** bills tracked by the Water Resources Program
 - **2** WRP bills passed



Bills that Passed

HB 1143, Walla Walla Trust Water Rights

- Water right holders who have banked rights in the Walla Walla Watershed Management Partnership's pilot water bank may temporarily donate these water rights into the Trust Water Rights Program.
- Donated water rights retain the same quantity as a trust water right that they held while banked under the pilot water bank for a period of 2 years.



Bills that Passed

SSB 5230, Groundwater Agreements

- Clarifies that Ecology and USBR may enter into agreements to co-manage and allocate groundwater that exists as a result of Columbia Basin Project operations without complying with procedures in RCW 90.44.130 on determinations of groundwater availability.



BUDGET



Water Banking Provisos

Capital Budget

- \$5M for a pilot grant program, \$2M of which is for applicants in the Methow

Operating Budget

- \$9M for a pilot grant program
- \$1M for administering the pilot grant program
- \$40K for policy work and reporting to the Legislature
- \$125K to the Washington Conservation Commission for a water bank in Okanogan County



Water Banking Provisos

Pilot grant program

- Total of \$14M for pass-through funds
- Funds support development of water banks to serve **local water needs**, and acquisition of water rights for those banks
 - Banks must preserve water rights for use in the county-of-origin and for permanent instream flow
- Strict eligibility criteria
 - Banks must be in rural, headwater counties
 - Entities must be public or in a public/private partnership
 - Projects must be “ready-to-go”
 - Applicants agree to maintain 1/3 of a water right for instream flow

Water Banking Provisos

Policy work

\$40,000 in operating funds to:

1. Change the process for review of water banks to make more information publicly available.
2. Refine policy recommendations from 2020 on the state's framework for water banking, trust water, and water transfers.
3. Report to the Legislature.



Adjudications Proviso

Operating Budget

- \$1M to prepare for an adjudication in the Nooksack basin and in the Lake Roosevelt/Upper Columbia basin (WRIA 58)
 - Won't file the adjudication in the Nooksack before June 1, 2023

Questions?

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