

# \$2.2 BILLION FOR FISH PASSAGE THROUGH IIJA

By Katherine Shok and Annabelle Rosser

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Built infrastructure on waterways such as culverts, dams, and levees maximize utility for communities, but can limit the movement of aquatic life. Fish passage provides a path through infrastructure for fish and other wildlife while allowing for the infrastructure to maintain its utility.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provided up to \$11 billion for fish passage through 17 programs; about \$2.2 billion is directed specifically for fish passage or to remove blockages in waterways.<sup>1</sup> \$1.78 billion in fish passage funding has been awarded through 12 programs,<sup>2</sup> excluding the Local and Regional Project Assistance Grants.<sup>3</sup> The Federal Interagency Fish Passage Task Force's [Fish Passage Portal](#) centralizes project data across programs and agencies. None of these projects were targeted for cancellation.

## Over half of funding has been awarded in the West

The \$1.78 billion that has been awarded funds 695 projects across 46 states and three territories. This sum exhausts four-fifths of the additional funding appropriated by IIJA for fish passage; about \$420 million dollars remains to be awarded across programs. Projects sited in the three westernmost states have received 56 percent of the total awarded funding for fish passage programs—about \$569 million between Washington (\$308 million, 62 projects), Oregon (\$131 million, 34 projects), and California (\$130 million, 34 projects). The only other states that have been awarded more than \$50 million are Maine (\$113 million, 17 projects) and Alaska (\$71.5 million, 55 projects). Four states have not been awarded any fish passage funding: Delaware, Kansas, Mississippi, and Nebraska (Figure 1).

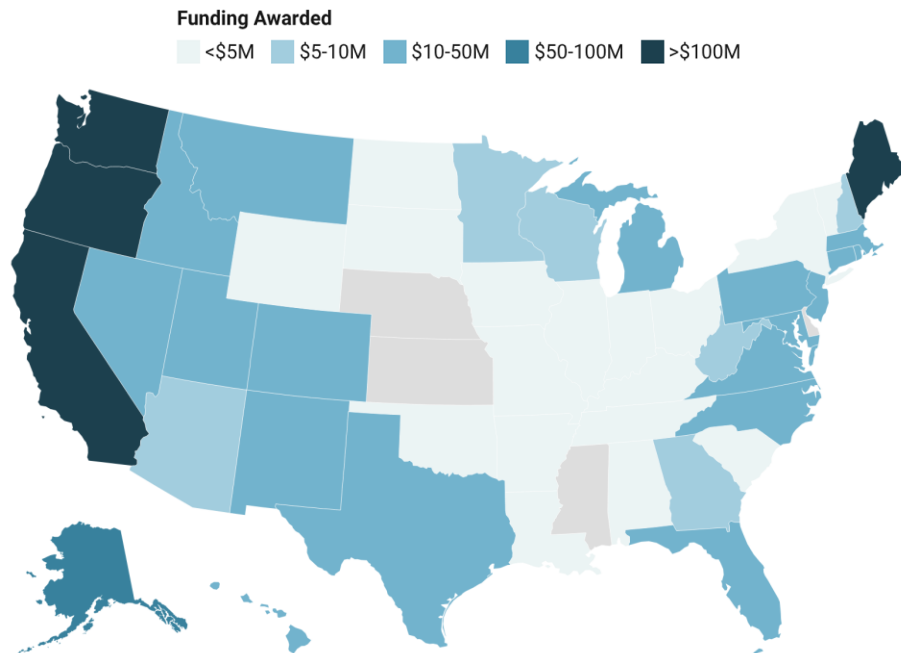
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<sup>1</sup> Although the replacement or rehabilitation of culverts is qualified under the Local and Regional Project Assistance Grants program, only 11 culvert projects have been funded by the \$7.6 billion awarded. The remainder of this fact sheet excludes consideration of this program.

<sup>2</sup> This includes \$10 million in Department of the Interior Indian Affairs awards for Fish Hatchery Operations and Maintenance funding by IRA.

<sup>3</sup> This program was renamed under IIJA and is more commonly known as the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program.

Figure 1: Awarded Fish Passage Funding is Concentrated in the West



Awards are geocoded if there is a place of performance that can be identified. Projects sited in multiple states or without location data are excluded from this map. The District of Columbia has been awarded \$1.5 million, the U.S. Virgin Islands have been awarded \$2.5 million, and Puerto Rico has been awarded \$6.5 million.

Source: [Water Program Portal, Outcomes Dashboard](#). Made with Datawrapper.

Montana is a standout state in that it has only been awarded \$13.6 million but hosts the most projects of any state at 79; many of these projects are small and funded via the [Legacy Road and Trail Remediation program](#) in the state's national forests. An additional 23 projects were awarded \$579 million and are either sited in multiple states or have no location data. Multi-state projects have been awarded \$272 million. The location of nearly \$307 million is unknown because it was not specified by the reporting agency or was spread across multiple states.

## Project highlights in Washington & Montana

The Fish Passage program, managed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), is funded at \$400 million by IJJA. In addition to providing funding and technical assistance through the competitive grant program over its capitalization, the program seeks to restore healthy habitats for fish nationwide, both in ecosystems and in fisheries. Further, NOAA released one grant worth about 15 percent of the program's total funding specifically for Tribal Nations. [One \\$14 million award](#) was made to the Yakama Nation to ameliorate fish passage for salmon and steelhead trout in and through the Yakima River basin. The award was part of more than \$112 million awarded

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to Tribal Nations from multiple programs for fish passage in [May 2024](#). The Yakama Nation is targeting multiple aquatic blockages where removal strengthens local ecologies and Tribal traditions. As a result, these projects support the function of Tribal fisheries, allow for returned access to heritage fishing sites, and renew access for juvenile salmon to habitats with cooler water temperatures to alleviate summer heat. The [Collaborate Aquatic Restoration Program](#), under the Department of the Interior’s Fish and Aquatic Conservation umbrella, is funded by IJJA and also focuses on fish passage. Run by the U.S. Forest Service, the program’s purpose is to maintain, restore, and protect watersheds in national forests and grasslands, which includes facilitating the passage of fish and other aquatic life.

Bitterroot National Forest in Montana was awarded \$1.36 million in [March 2024](#), receiving \$450,000 in fiscal year 2024 and the remaining \$911,000 through fiscal year 2026. By partnering with the Clark Fork Coalition, the state of Montana, the Bonneville Power Administration, local counties, private donors, and irrigation districts, the forest is implementing the Lost Horse Passage and Water Quality Enhancement Plan. The plan is meant to restore connection and flow to more than 34 miles of fish habitat in the forest’s upper watershed. To defragment and rewater the habitat of bull trout and Westslope cutthroat trout—critical species under the Endangered Species Act—awardees will cooperate to divert irrigation and surface water storage infrastructure at six locations.

## Looking Ahead

Most of these programs are housed in the U.S. Departments of Commerce, the Interior, and Agriculture. Requests for proposals are expected for the remaining \$420 million in funding for use in fiscal year 2026, IJJA’s final year of authorization. Some money has moved under the Trump Administration, [including](#) awards for fish passage and habit restoration from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The Water Program Portal will track award announcements for fish passage and other water infrastructure as they are announced. Current annual appropriations,<sup>4</sup> signed into law by President Trump in January 2026, include hundreds of millions of dollars to support fish populations. For instance, almost \$400 million has been authorized for NOAA to promote and develop American fisheries. Another \$65 million is apportioned to the Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund, a fish passage program which received a \$172 million infusion from IJJA. IJJA greatly increased support for domestic fish passage, with positive, lasting effects for years to come.

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<sup>4</sup> [Commerce, Justice, Science; Energy and Water Development; and Interior and Environment Appropriations Act, 2026.](#)