

# WDFW Operating Budget Briefing

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Washington  
Department of  
**FISH &  
WILDLIFE**

# Today

Budget Timeline

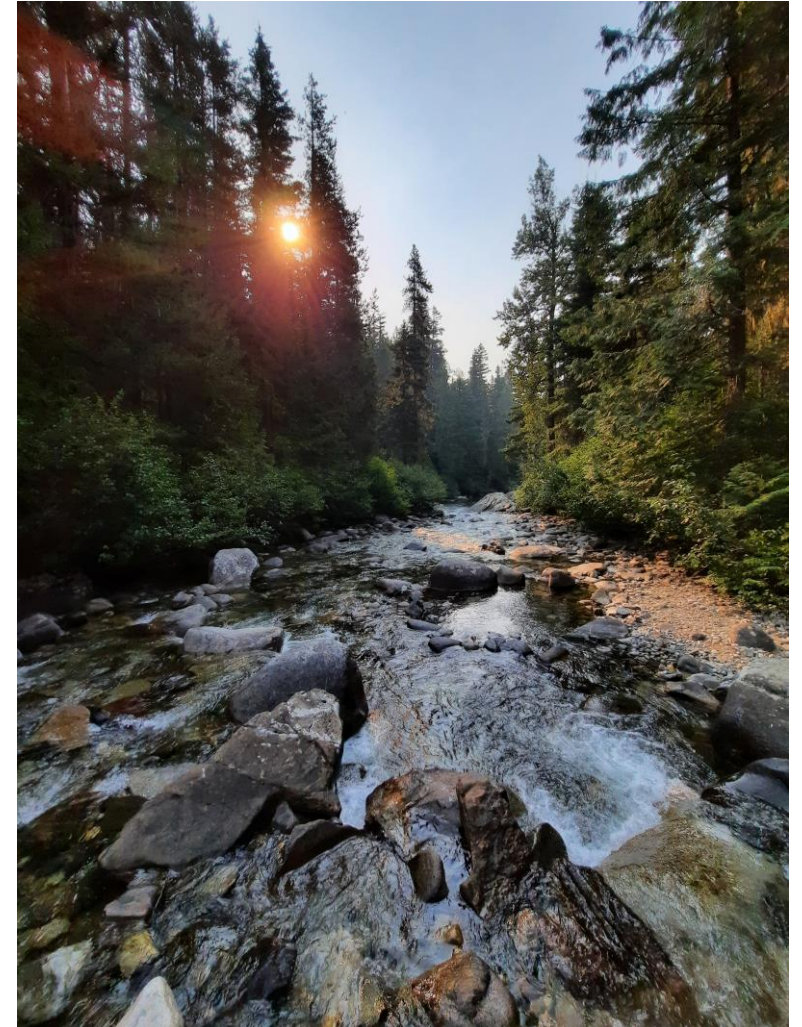
List of packages biennial 2025-27

Maintenance Level

Policy Level

Technical and emergent items for 2025  
supplemental

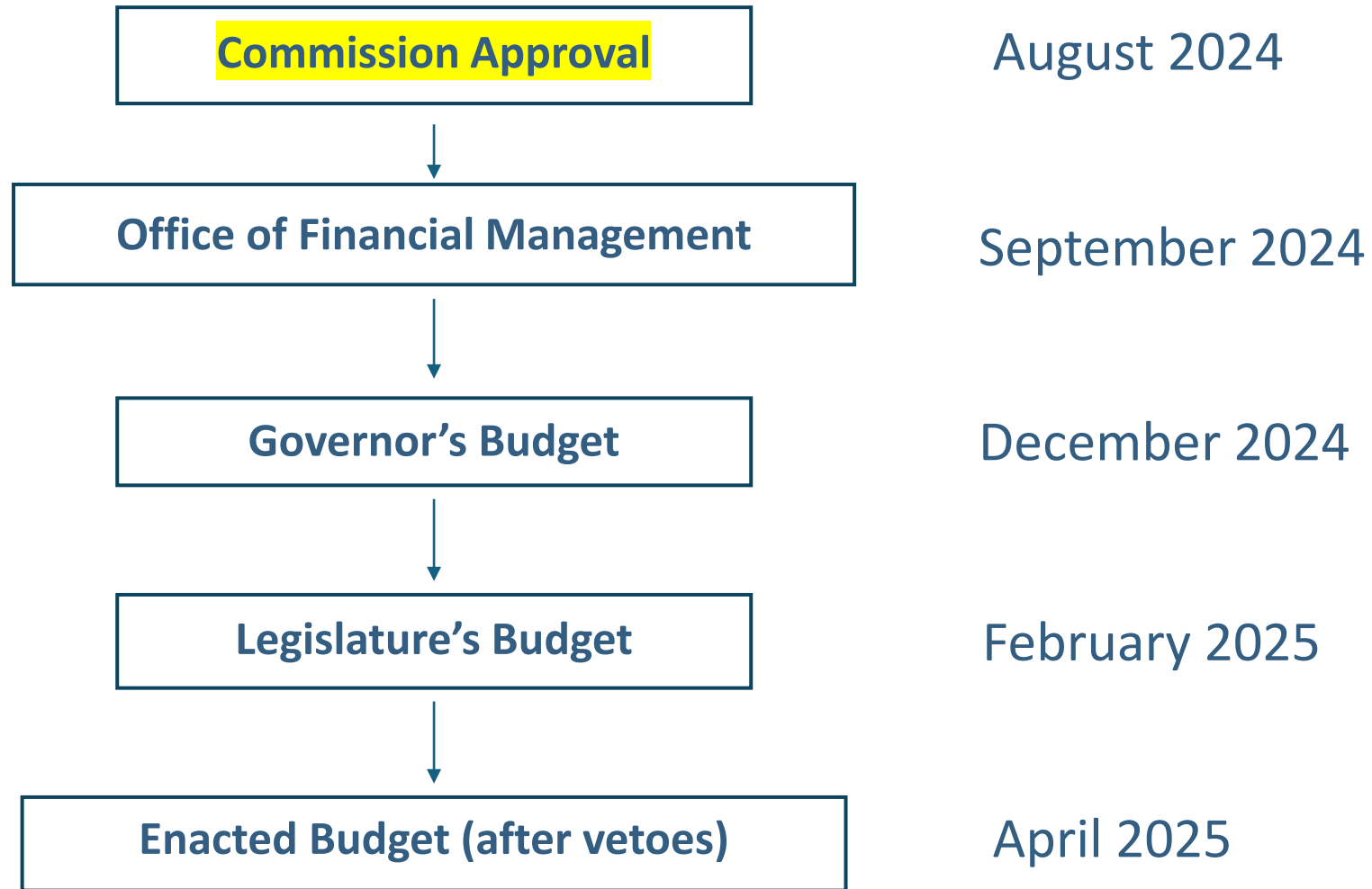
Seeking approval from the Commission





# Operating budget request process and timeline

# Broad timeline (dollars available July 1, 2025)





# Maintenance Level Packages

# Maintenance Level Requests

Maintenance level is for areas where costs are increasing in ways we don't control



# Maintenance Level – approx. \$21M

Lease Rate Adjustment-*-\$0.2 million*

Utility Rate Adjustments-*-\$0.5 million*

Other Fund Adjustments-*-\$0.0 million*

IT Equipment Maint. and Software-*-\$2.1 million*

Equipment Replacement Costs-*-\$2.5 million*

Operating Costs from Capital Projects-*-\$0.5 million*

Fish Food and Animal Feed-*-\$0.5 million*

WCC contract increase from ECY-*-\$0.1 million*

Wildfire Suppression-*-\$0.2 million*

Personnel Services Charges-*-\$0.2 million*

Body Cam Subscription fill-*-\$0.8 million*

Public Records Requests-*-\$1.3 million*

Enforcement Vehicle Replacement-*-\$1.4 million*

WSP Radio Cost Increases-*-\$0.3 million*

HPA O&M-*-\$4.8 million*

Mark and Tag Rate Increase-*-\$0.2 million*

Compensation funding backfill of federal-*-\$3.2 million*

Compensation funding backfill for local-*-\$2.8 million*



# Policy Level Packages



# Decision package concepts

Phase II,  
“Onetime” to ongoing,  
New ideas





# “Phase II”

# Phase II Packages

1 – WDFW Staff and  
Volunteer Safety

2 – Restoring Washington's  
Biodiversity



# 1 - WDFW Staff & Volunteer Safety - \$9.1 million

- WDFW enhances safety training and awareness after recent employee fatalities.
- New policies and equipment focus on field staff safety improvements.
- Ongoing funding supports expanded safety capacity and volunteer safety initiatives.



## 2 - Restoring Washington's Biodiversity - \$15.0 million

- Threats to biodiversity include habitat loss, climate change, pollution, and invasive species.
- Funds the remainder of the original 23-25 Biodiversity request
- Funding implements State Wildlife Action Plan and increases species and habitat conservation and public engagement.





**“Onetime” to ongoing**

# DFW items funded “onetime”

- 3 - Salmon & Steelhead Monitoring
- 4 - Quagga & Zebra Mussel Prevention
- 5 – Respond to Wildlife Disease
- 6 - Riparian Systems Assessment
- 7 - Wolf Recovery
- 8 - Streamflow Policy Support
- 9 - Columbia River ESA Permitting
- 10 - Pinniped Predation
- 12 - Toutle & Skamania Hatcheries
- 11 - Crab Fishery & Humpbacks
- 13 - Fish Passage Prioritization
- 14 - Lake WA Sockeye Predator Support
- 15 - Wolf Advisory Group



# 3 - Salmon & Steelhead Monitoring - \$1.6 million

- Critical fisheries monitoring for species conservation and recovery.
- Co-management with Treaty Tribes for fishing opportunities.
- Supports Puget Sound freshwater fisheries and steelhead management plans.





## 4 - Quagga & Zebra Mussel Prevention – \$7.2 million

- Expand quagga mussel activities: detection, habitat protection, and impact reduction.
- Increase prevention, response readiness, and public awareness.
- Address \$100+ million annual threat to Washington's resources.



# 5 – Respond to Wildlife Disease (Wildlife Disease only) – \$0.9 million

- Wildlife in Washington face many stressors, including a changing climate and resulting increase in wildlife disease risks.
- Enhance our capacity to:
  - assess and track wildlife health and disease outbreaks,
  - improve our ability to proactively mitigate wildlife disease risks associated with climate change, and
  - provide management strategies to preserve healthy and resilient wildlife into Washington’s future.



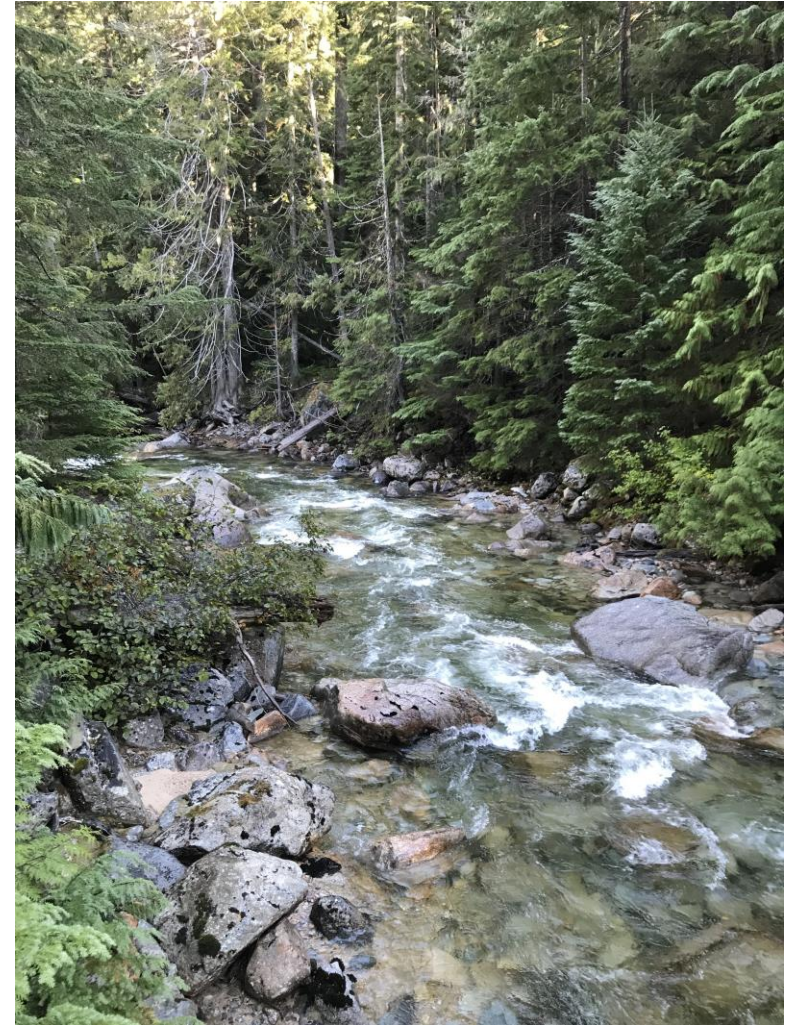
# 5 – Respond to Wildlife Disease (CWD Only) – \$2.8 million

- **First Case Detected in Washington State:** On July 26, 2024, WDFW confirmed Washington's first CWD case in a deceased adult female white-tailed deer in Spokane County.
- **Disease Overview:** CWD affects deer, elk, and moose, with no cure available. It has been found in 34 states and 4 Canadian provinces and can threaten cervid populations if widespread.
- **Next Steps:** To manage the outbreak, WDFW plans to increase tissue sampling, consider regulatory changes, and possibly reduce cervid densities.
- **Resource Needs:** Additional resources are required for staff deployment, check stations, sample testing, monitoring, management actions, carcass disposal, and public education.



## 6 - Riparian Systems Assessment - \$2.0 million

- Riparian habitat critical for wildlife, especially salmonids; lack of data hinders restoration prioritization.
- Legislature directs WDFW to develop Riparian Data Engine for informed investments.
- Proposal aims to increase habitat by 10% and data accessibility by 66-100%, enhancing restoration efforts.



# 7 - Wolf Recovery - \$1.0 million

- Wolf population growth in Washington increases wolf/livestock conflicts.
- Non-lethal strategies funded to mitigate wolf/livestock conflicts.
- WDFW seeks ongoing funding to continue to implement mitigation efforts and support wolf recovery.



## 8 - Streamflow Policy Support - \$1.1 million

- Long-term, strategic vision needed for Washington's water management.
- Historical over-allocation harms fish and wildlife in watersheds.
- WDFW offers expertise on streamflow and ecological implications.



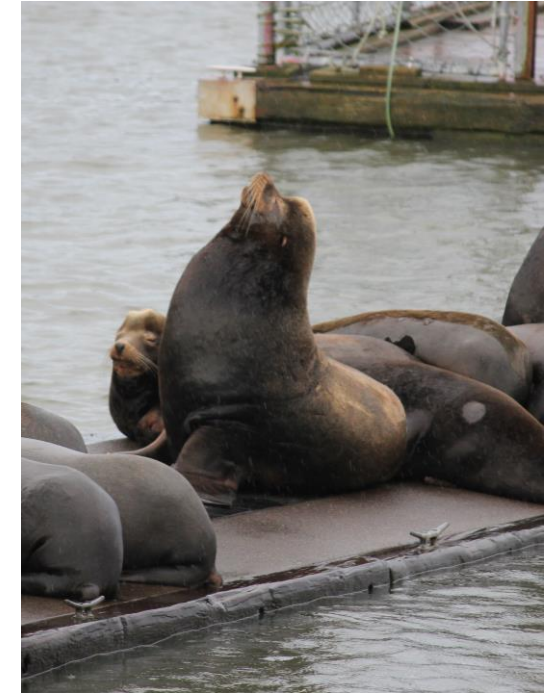
# 9 - Columbia River ESA Permitting - \$1.4 million

- Expand WDFW staffing for new ESA fishery permits in Columbia River.
- Ensure legal coverage for year-round ESA-listed salmon and steelhead fisheries.
- Complete permits to mitigate litigation risk and enhance conservation goals for fisheries.



# 10 - Pinniped Predation – \$3.1 million

- Manage pinniped predation on ESA-listed salmon and steelhead in Columbia River.
- Monitor pinniped abundance, diets, and movements for impact assessment.
- Continued funding crucial for supporting tribal interests and Southern Resident Task Force recommendations.





# 11 - Crab Fishery & Humpbacks - \$0.6 million

- Ensure accurate data for Washington coastal Dungeness crab fishery management.
- Transition to real-time electronic monitoring (EM) system starting 2024.
- Fund EM for tribal co-management, enforcement, whale protection, and public health during biotoxin events.



# 12 - Toutle & Skamania Hatcheries - \$1.9 million

- Mitchell Act funds support 7 hatcheries, producing 17M salmon/steelhead in lower Columbia River.
- \$1.9M shortfall risks closure of 2 facilities, loss of 1.5M fish, and impacts on fisheries and treaty commitments.
- Addressing shortfall crucial for economic stability and cultural vitality of lower Columbia River communities.



# 13 - Fish Passage Prioritization - \$0.8 million

- Develop statewide strategy for fish passage barrier removal.
- Fund Fish Passage Strategist, IT specialist, and field team for database updates.
- Ensure efficient and coordinated barrier removal to benefit salmon and Southern Resident Killer Whales.



# 14 - Lake WA Sockeye Predator Support– \$1.4 million

- Non-native fish predation lowers Chinook and Sockeye returns in Lake Washington.
- Addressing predator suppression crucial for salmon survival and fishing opportunities.
- Hydroacoustic monitoring validates success of predator removal efforts.



# 15 - Wolf Advisory Group - \$0.3 million

- Public trust and social support for wolf recovery hinge on effective facilitation.
- Initial funding supported external facilitator for Wolf Advisory Group (WAG) collaboration.
- Ongoing funding needed to sustain WAG's inclusive wolf management strategies.





# Unfunded, Underfunded, and New

# DFW Unfunded, Underfunded and New

16 - Expanding Fish & Wildlife Police

17 - Scientific Data Modernization

18 - Hatchery Investment Strategy

19 - Emerging Fishery Implementation

20 - Forest Health & Fuel Reduction

21 - Lands Stewardship

22 - Expand Wildlife Conflict Response

23 - Facilities Six-Year Plan Alignment

24 - Replacement Equipment

25 - Fish Passage & Screening Capacity

26 - Coastal Salmonids Management

27 - Reduce Emissions, Build Resilience

28 - Managing Emergent Toxic Threats

29 - Hatchery Conservation Program

30 - Mobile Harvest Application Support

# 16 - Expanding Fish & Wildlife Police – \$18.6 million

- **Enforcement Needs:** Washington's population has grown rapidly, requiring more Fish & Wildlife Officers for natural resource protection and public safety.
- **Current Capacity:** WDFW has 171 officers covering state and federal lands, marine areas, and waterways, and is poised to add 20 officers and six support staff.
- **Impact of Expansion:** Added officer positions increases patrol presence, response time, crime deterrence, and bolsters natural resource protection statewide.





## 17 - Scientific Data Modernization – \$6.9 million

- **Unified Data Integration:** Centralize data across WDFW, integrate diverse sources, eliminate silos.
- **Scalability and Efficiency:** Scalable platform, reduce costs, consolidate systems for adaptability.
- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Improve governance, facilitate collaboration, boost productivity, meet regulatory standards.



# 18 - Hatchery Investment Strategy - \$2.7 million

- State-operated hatcheries need expanded capacity for increased salmonid production.
- Funding supports recreational and commercial harvest, tribal needs, Southern Resident killer whale prey, and wild salmon conservation.
- Without funding, hatchery production goals could be missed, fish health monitoring may suffer, and mass marking for harvest identification may not happen, affecting tribal fisheries.



# 19 - Emerging Fishery Implementation - \$0.6 million

- **Diversification Pressure:** Increase use of mark-selective gears in lower Columbia River commercial fishery.
- **Commercial Gear Assessment:** Evaluate alternative gears' viability; inform legislative recommendations.
- **Funding Need:** Fund research to monitor emerging fishery; assess alternative gear viability.



# 20 - Forest Health & Fuel Reduction - \$2.0 million

- **Budget Adjustment:** 2023-25 budget reduced forest health funding to \$4 million, shifted to Forest Resiliency Account.
- **2024 Supplemental Support:** Received additional \$2 million annually; 2025-27 commitment remains at \$4 million.
- **Restore Funding Request:** WDFW seeks to restore remaining \$2 million on-going for forest health, supporting "All Lands, All Hands" strategy.



# 21 - Invest in Lands Stewardship - \$9.9 million

- **Funding Deficit:** WDFW lacks funds to ensure ecological health of public lands, compromising conservation and recreation values.
- **Initial Strategic Investments:**
  - Address urgent needs to enhance lands stewardship, strengthen real property management, and protect cultural resources.
  - Develop long-term methodology to predict and track management and funding needs.
  - Implement 2022 Recreation Strategy to manage for quality and sustainable recreation.



# 22 - Expand Wildlife Conflict Response - \$7.3 million

- **Expanded Response:** Continual population growth in Washington necessitates additional investments in handling human/wildlife conflicts and meeting statutory obligations statewide.
- **Human-Wildlife Interactions:** Funding will shift more responses from Enforcement to Wildlife Program, enhancing efficiency and service the people of Washington.
- **Beaver Relocation:** Program funding supports training, pathogen testing, and updating critical beaver population data for effective implementation of statutory direction.



## 23 – Facilities Six-Year Plan Alignment - \$3.3 million

- WDFW is required to submit a six-year facilities plan.
- These expenses are for one-time costs and first-year annual costs for BN 2025-27.
- Includes costs primarily related to leased facilities with urgent replacement needs.



# 24 - Replacement Equipment - \$4.6 million

- **Equipment Aging:** CAMP's heavy equipment exceeds useful life, leading to frequent breakdowns and safety issues.
- **Safety Concerns:** Aging equipment does not meet current standards, necessitating frequent replacement due to safety and repair challenges.
- **Financial Impact:** Most equipment is rented, costing money without revenue generation for the revolving account.





## 25 - Fish Passage & Screening Capacity - \$3.3 million

- **Rule Implementation:** WDFW creating WAC language to implement authority given under Chapter 77.57 RCW for fish passage and screening design.
- **Salmon Protection:** Rules aim to protect salmon from barriers and improper diversions, crucial for population recovery.
- **Orcas' Prey:** Implementation supports Southern Resident Killer Whales by ensuring access to preferred salmon prey.



## 26 - Coastal Salmonids Management - \$4.8 million

- **ESA Petition Response:** Holistic package for Chinook and steelhead, key for ESA listing concern, emphasizes robust monitoring and regional management plans.
- **Population Monitoring:** Led by experts to inform management strategies.
- **Management Tools:** Develops plans with co-managers, modern tools for sustainable fisheries and conservation.



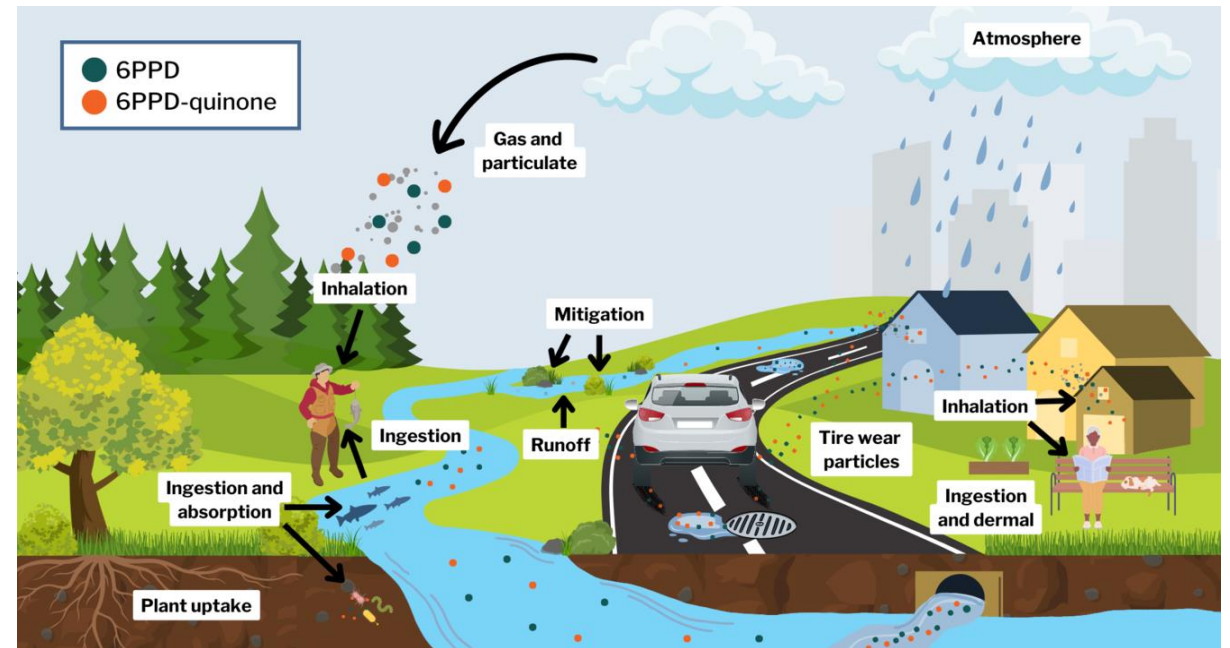
# 27 - Reduce Emissions, Build Resilience – \$13.0 million

- **Climate Resilience:** Enhancing resilience to climate impacts, integrating science into projects, programs, and activities.
- **Emissions Reduction:** Electrifying fleet, reducing building energy use, expanding Commute Trip Reduction program to cut GHG emissions.
- **Strategic Investment:** Supports Washington State Climate Resilience Strategy, focusing on climate science and institutional capacity building.



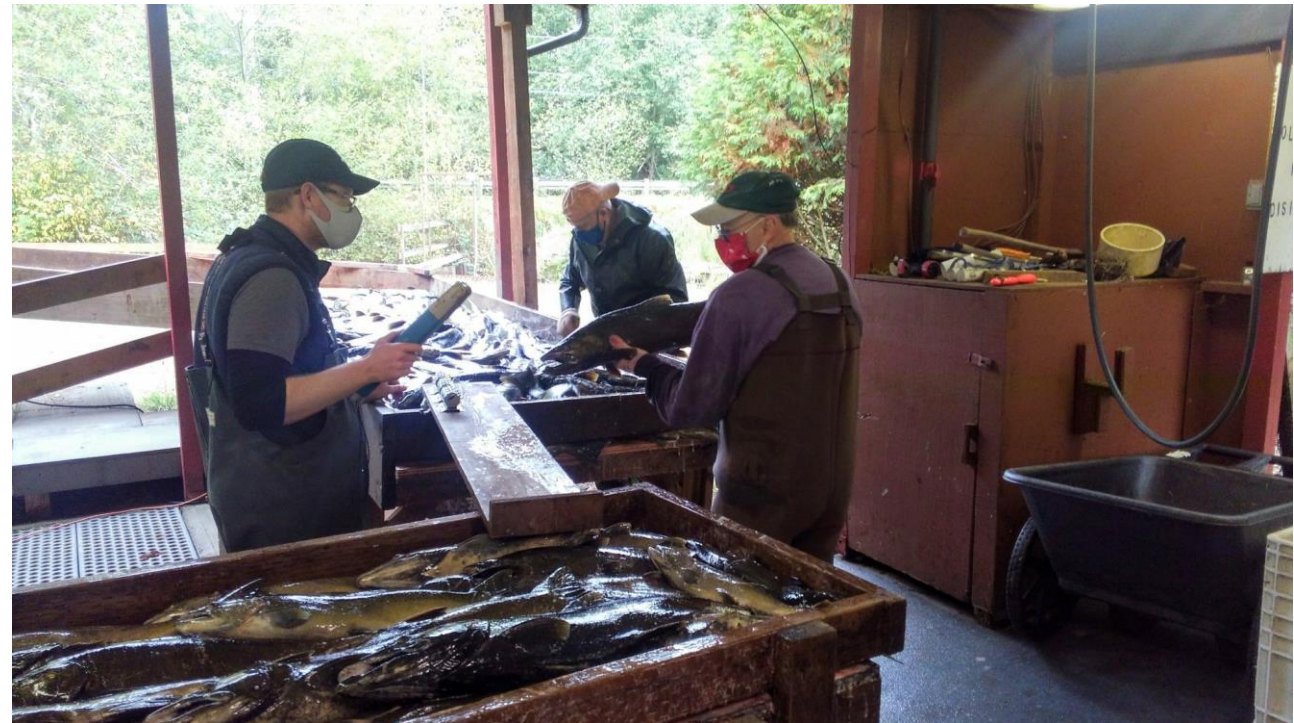
# 28 - Managing Emergent Toxic Threats – \$2.0 million

- **Contaminant Tracking:** Monitor PFAS and 6PPD-q in juvenile salmon habitats and Puget Sound fish species.
- **Guided Cleanup:** Inform pollution prevention and cleanup efforts based on monitoring results.
- **Health Protection:** Test fish tissues for contaminants to safeguard public health.



## 29 - Hatchery Conservation Program - \$2.6 million

- **Salmon Population Threats:** Address climate and habitat impacts with conservation hatchery programs.
- **Program Expansion:** Extend effective hatchery methods to safeguard and diversify at-risk salmon populations.
- **Chehalis Chinook Study:** Assess feasibility for a conservation hatchery program, backed by tribal and stakeholder support.



# 30 - Mobile Harvest Application Support - \$7.1 million

- **Harvest Reporting:** Develop mobile tools for accurate, real-time harvest reporting to meet management and legal obligations.
- **Electronic Catch-Record-Card (eCRC):** Mobile apps enable timely submission and support future tool development.
- **Implementation Support:** Funding includes staff for successful mobile reporting deployment and ongoing support.





# 2025 Supplemental Packages

# 2025 Supplemental – approx. \$9M

There are two amendments possible to each biennial budget

- The first and second supplemental budgets.
  - The first supplemental budget was discussed and enacted last session.
  - This session, we'll be discussing the **second supplemental budget**, which is enacted only a month or so before the biennium ends. That means it only useful for costs we must pay for and technical items.



# 2025 Supplemental – approx. \$8.3M

LFWA Equipment & Monitoring - *\$2.4 million*

Stanwood Facility - *\$3.0 million*

Thurston Co. Warehouse - *\$0.8 million*

HPA Ops & Maint - *\$1.0 million*

098 transfer to 24N - *\$0.3 million*

Body-camera subscriptions - *\$0.1 million*

Wildfire Suppression - *\$0.1 million*

Post Wildfire Habitat Restoration - *\$0.4 million*

Personnel Services Charges - *\$0.1 million*

WSP Radio Dispatch Charge Increase - *\$0.1 million*



# General Remarks and Questions

# Next steps

- Seek motion for approval.
- Finish work on packages.
- Submit to OFM by September 10.





**Questions?**