



NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Idaho Water Board opens 30-day public comment period on draft criteria for funding water projects statewide; comments due May 20

BOISE - (April 21, 2022) – The Idaho Water Resource Board is seeking public comment on draft criteria for two, new funding programs that the Board is rolling out for financing new water projects statewide.

The Board's Finance Committee met on Wednesday to consider a presentation from staff on draft criteria for evaluating Aging Water Infrastructure Projects and for projects that might qualify for the large [Regional Water Sustainability Project list](#). The Board plans to consider comments and develop the application process for water projects, based on the finalized criteria.

The draft criteria for the new programs can be found here: <https://idwr.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/iwrb/1-Meetings2022/Finance-Committee-Meeting-No.-2-22-Materials.pdf>

Feedback on the Board's draft criteria should be sent in writing to staff member Neeley Miller, Neeley.Miller@idwr.idaho.gov by May 20.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to fund important water projects statewide," said Water Board member and Finance Chair Jo Ann Cole-Hansen of Lewiston. "Our purpose is to evaluate worthy water projects throughout the state. The goal of our draft criteria is to stretch our grant money as far as we can to address as many projects as we can."

Anticipating that the Board might receive significant federal dollars for major water projects, the Board developed an initial list of Regional Water Sustainability Projects last year. The Board plans to update the list in the coming year.

Getting placed on the Board's list of Regional Water Sustainability Projects is not a funding commitment, but rather, a recognition that the project has the potential to help achieve water sustainability, officials said. Each project on the list is unique and will have its own implementation timelines and milestones.

In a new funding program for Aging Water Infrastructure projects, the Board will set up a competitive application process for evaluating projects that involve a mix of loans/grants and meet a cost-share requirement.

The Aging Infrastructure program "is a new program to support projects that address aging water infrastructure needs as an investment in the Idaho economy and to ensure long-term water sustainability," Board officials said.

The Board defines aging water infrastructure projects as “any project intended to address repair, maintenance, replacement or improvements to existing infrastructure that supports water delivery, storage, treatment and application of water,” according to the draft criteria.

Water users could bundle other types of cost-share funding into the mix in addition to the Board-financed loan or grant programs, officials said.

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