



Jaxson Dart gives N.Y. a giant jolt

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\$4.3B transportation package passes

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The Oregon Senate passed a transportation funding package Sept. 29 that is expected to raise \$4.3 billion over the next decade and will avert layoffs at the Oregon Department of Transportation. The package was approved a month after lawmakers began the special ses-

sion to consider Gov. Tina Kotek's proposal. The session was delayed twice to allow Sen. Chris Gorsek, D-Gresham, to recover from back surgery complications. The transportation package passed in the House on Sept. 1. A new charge for electric vehicles, bumps to the payroll tax, vehicle registration and title fees and an extra six cents per gallon on gas are expected to



Kotek

It's a far cry from Democrats' initial proposal, which would have brought in

bring in \$4.3 billion over the next decade. That revenue will go toward funding transportation throughout the state and prevent nearly 500 layoffs at the Oregon Department of Transportation.

\$11.7 billion over the next 10 years but fell apart at the end of the session in June. While several Democrats criticized the bill for not doing enough, the caucus unanimously voted in favor of the proposal. Both bills passed with an 18-11 vote, the exact number of "yes" votes necessary. One Senate Republican was excused.

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Habitat restoration



Kathleen George, tribal councilwoman of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, talks about the importance of habitat restoration near the North Santiam River at the tribe's Chahalpam property. KEVIN NERI/STATESMAN JOURNAL

Grand Ronde tribe restores passage for threatened salmon, steelhead

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On a late September morning, leaves gently fell over the Chahalpam property, a 462-acre conservation site located along the North Santiam River. In this peaceful natural area, the quiet was broken only by a construction crew, their work centering around a hollow concrete cube with an unexpected beneficiary: fish. The structure, a box culvert, will give threatened salmon and steelhead populations a means to access critical off-stream habitat, a major goal of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, owners of the property. "This is part of a multi-year effort to restore that riparian habitat," tribal councilwoman Kathleen George said. "It's going to reconnect (fish) to potential spawning areas, bring fish up onto the landscape seasonally, and we'll have a living, breathing river system rather than one that's confined to its main channel." By restoring these connections and replanting native species, the tribe is supporting a wider effort across the Willamette Basin to save threatened salmon and steelhead populations while reconnecting to a deeply-rooted history on this landscape.



Construction workers build culverts to help with habitat restoration at the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde's Chahalpam property. KEVIN NERI/STATESMAN JOURNAL

A valuable connection

Willamette salmon and steelhead currently have threatened status under the Endangered Species Act. According to NOAA Fisheries, lack of passage is a main driver behind the decline. "The best science says that we are at very real

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Salmon passes through key Klamath River fish ladder

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A salmon passed through the fish ladder of a key dam on the upper Klamath River on Sept. 24, in what wildlife officials hope is a sign of the iconic fish repopulating ever-greater stretches of the basin following the largest dam removal project in United States history. A video captured a Chinook salmon ascending the fish ladder at Keno Dam, southwest of Klamath Falls, according to the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. The state agency said it's the farthest upstream salmon have been known to reach since the removal of four lower river dams allowed the ocean-going fish to return to spawning grounds blocked for nearly a century. The news is important because the majority of spawning habitat in the Oregon portion of the upper Klamath is above Keno Dam, Link River Dam and Upper Klamath Lake. "Salmon are again reminding us of their resiliency as they return to a portion of river basin that hasn't seen salmon for more than 100 years," ODFW Watershed Manager Phil Milburn said in a news release. "That salmon have so quickly shown us they can pass this key barrier renews our sense of optimism for this population and comes after years of work by Tribes, agencies and other partners."

Four dams removed on Klamath River, but salmon must still ascend two dams

In 2024, four hydroelectric dams were removed from the lower Klamath River — J.C. Boyle, Copco No. 1, Copco No. 2 and Iron Gate. Since then, salmon have been spotted spawning in river habitat blocked to them for more than 100 years. In 2024, more than 500 adult fall Chinook were confirmed in habitat below Keno Dam. But moving upstream remains a critical goal to access better habitat, officials said. Keno Dam and Link River Dam remain in operation for irrigation and flood control. Salmon must swim up the fish ladders of both. ODFW officials said they hope the Bureau of Reclamation can improve upon current ladders. "Oregon has high standards for fish passage and it will take some work for

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