

Clean Air: Oregon to receive \$1.1M to improve air quality

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Oregon will receive \$1,116,626 in federal grants is coming to Oregon to improve air quality monitoring in communities with environmental and health outcome disparities stemming from pollution.

The awards from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will support projects by Verde in Portland's Cully neighborhood, the Confederated Tribes of Coos Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality's work to monitor and use collected air quality data to inform actions for improving local air quality across the state.

Award recipients and amounts headed to Oregon:

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

\$498,796 to work with communities, universities, and local and state agencies to co-design an equitable and sustainable community monitoring framework for collaborative action. This framework will be used to

empower communities- prioritizing underserved, disadvantaged and overburdened communities- to monitor and leverage the data to inform action that will improve their local air quality.

Verde

\$117,830 to collaborate with partners to gather air quality data using air monitors and create actionable community engagement strategies to ameliorate air quality concerns in Portland, Oregon's Cully neighborhood. Project efforts will result in the development of long-term expertise among the Cully community and unprecedented grassroots involvement in regulatory processes that could significantly improve air quality for Cully residents.

Confederated Tribes of Coos Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians

\$500,000 to increase community engagement on outdoor and indoor air quality, and develop a network of air quality monitors. Through the use of reliable and accurate monitoring equipment, the project aims to improve data collection on local air quality and mitigate adverse health impacts due to air pollution exposure.

"Every Oregonian in every community across the state deserves to breathe clean air free from hazardous air pollutants that can lead to cancer, neurological disorders and other serious health impairments," Oregon Senator Merkley said.

Merkley is chairman of the committee that provides EPA with its funding.

"This EPA funding will go a long way in ensuring communities are able to monitor air quality, collect detailed data on the toxic air pollution, and take meaningful steps to address it," he said.

"An essential step in reducing air pollution for communities throughout Oregon is to equip them with modern monitoring tools that provide accurate and timely data," Oregon U.S. Senator Ron Wyden said.

"These federal investments in those tools from legislation I worked to pass will make a huge difference for people living and working in these communities. And I'll keep battling for similar investments that make similar air quality impacts statewide."

According to Merkley, with over \$30 million in Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (IRA) funds and \$20 million in American Rescue Plan investments coupled with increases to its annual budget that his committee has provided since becoming chairman of the Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee, EPA has been able to significantly expand its support for projects led by community-based nonprofit organizations, state and local governments, and Tribal governments aimed at improving air quality in communities across the United States, and particularly in communities that are underserved and historically marginalized.