

Figures offer glimpse at state's share of stimulus

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CHEYENNE -- Wyoming's share of the \$787 billion federal economic stimulus package includes hundreds of millions of dollars for highways, Medicaid and education, according to preliminary figures trickling out of Washington, D.C.

A report from the National Conference of State Legislators, one of several groups tracking the figures, shows that Wyoming will also receive several smaller-ticket items, including \$2.6 million for child care, \$1.6 million for immunizations and \$1.7 million for homelessness prevention.

Sen. Mike Enzi's office provided the NCLS figures Monday, saying they are similar to amounts being reported by federal agencies, and the Senate Appropriations Committee.

However, Enzi's spokeswoman, Elly Pickett, emphasized that the figures did not originate in Enzi's office, and could soon change. Enzi, Sen. John Barrasso and Rep. Cynthia Lummis all voted against the stimulus bill.

"This bill is over 1,000 pages long with very little instructive language guiding the distribution process," Pickett said in a statement. "Therefore, all funding numbers are subject to change."

Nearly a week after Congress approved and President Barack Obama signed the federal stimulus package, details about Wyoming's share of the funds are starting to emerge.

Wyoming will receive roughly \$540 million from the stimulus package, according to the NCLS and Barrasso who reported the figure during a visit to the state Legislature on Friday.

According to the NCLS, the state's share includes more than \$25 million for special education, \$20 million for state energy programs and nearly \$20 million for clean drinking water.

The state could also receive funding for Head Start, elderly nutrition and employment services. (See list for other figures.)

However, Enzi's office cautioned that strings attached to portions of the stimulus package may prevent Wyoming from qualifying for some of the money.

For example, some funds are available for states with rates of unemployment of 6 percent or greater. Wyoming's current unemployment rate is 3.4 percent.

Wyoming may also be required to reject millions of dollars if it declines to change laws to accommodate strings attached to the funds.

For example, the state may have to pass up \$3 million for unemployment insurance modernization unless it changes state statutes, according to National Employment Law Project figures provided by Enzi's office.

Gov. Dave Freudenthal has already mentioned that he would be reluctant to support changes in state law simply to access stimulus funds.

At the state level, officials in Cheyenne are still trying to nail down Wyoming's share of the stimulus.

Freudenthal's spokeswoman, Cara Eastwood, said the governor's office is examining stimulus figures from public sources like NCLS, and from some state agencies that are in direct contact with federal funding sources.

"There is still just a lot of uncertainty in the figures," Eastwood said. "We're still trying to puzzle it

together."

In addition to the direct payments to states, the federal stimulus package includes hundreds of millions in tax breaks, which will directly benefit Wyoming taxpayers.

The federal stimulus package is designed to jumpstart the sagging national economy with a massive injection of money.

Critics of the stimulus package point out that the funds will increase the federal budget deficit and expand the national debt, with no guarantee that the infusion will resuscitate the economy.

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Here is an unofficial list of Wyoming's share of the \$787 billion federal economic stimulus package:

Program Amount

Fiscal Stabilization Fund \$15 million

Medicaid \$110 million

Highways and bridges \$157.6 million

Transit capital grants \$9.3 million

Drinking water state revolving fund \$19.7 million

Clean water state revolving fund \$19.5

Weatherization assistance \$19.8 million

State energy program \$20.4 million

Emergency food and shelter \$200,000

Immunization \$1.6 million

Foster care/adoption assistance \$300,000

Elderly nutrition \$500,000

Child care \$2.6 million

Head Start \$1.1 million

Community service block grant \$5 million

Grants to local education authorities \$25 million

School improvement \$6.8 million

Special education Part B \$25.8 million

Special education Part C \$1.8 million

Vocational rehabilitation \$1.6 million
Educational technology \$3.1 million
School lunch equipment \$100,000
Public housing capital fund \$1.4 million
HUD affordable housing grant \$3.6 million
Homeless prevention \$1.7 million
Internet crimes against children \$1.6 million
Violence Against Women Act \$800,000
Unemployment insurance/
state administration grants \$900,000
Employment service \$2.1 million
Law enforcement grants \$5.6 million
Community service for
older Americans \$600,000
Job training for adults \$1.2 million
Job training for youths \$2.9 million
Dislocated workers \$900,000
Less than \$100,000 each for:
Community assistance/food assistance
Education for homeless
Crime victims assistance
Total \$538.6 million

Source: National Conference of State Legislators, provided by U.S. Sen. Mike Enzi.