



STATE OF IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

STRATEGIC PLAN

FY2025-2028



A photograph of an osprey in mid-flight, catching a large salmon in its talons. The bird is shown from the side, with its wings spread wide, revealing brown and white feathers. It is holding the salmon by its tail and midsection. The salmon is bright red and is splashing water as it is lifted from the surface. The background is a soft-focus view of water.

Mission

To protect human health and the quality of Idaho's air, land, and water.

Vision

An Idaho where the quality of our environment enhances healthy living and supports thriving communities.

Values

Integrity. Service. Teamwork. Results.

Director's Message

I am pleased to present the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ's) strategic plan for fiscal years 2025–2028. This plan details our core functions and services and our focus on improvements over the next four years. It also outlines how we intend to use our financial resources to ensure that the services we provide meet the needs of the state and the citizens we serve. We will continue to work towards fulfilling DEQ's core functions and use our financial resources efficiently through various system modernization efforts and process improvements. We will also continue to improve public and partner outreach and educational efforts and streamlining the public records request process.

Core Services

Our core services underpin every element of our strategic plan and drive how we respond to fiscal, regulatory, and environmental realities. These services span our air, water, and waste management programs and our compliance assistance and outreach efforts:

- ↳ Manage air quality to ensure compliance with federal health-based standards.
- ↳ Protect soil and water from hazardous, solid, and mining wastes and petroleum contamination.
- ↳ Manage, mitigate, and remediate contaminated areas.
- ↳ Protect public health and the environment at and around the Idaho National Laboratory.
- ↳ Maintain and improve surface and ground water quality.
- ↳ Ensure delivery of safe and reliable drinking water from public water systems.
- ↳ Prevent, prepare for, and respond to public health emergencies.
- ↳ Encourage and empower Idaho citizens, businesses, and communities to be environmentally responsible.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE

YOUR DEQ



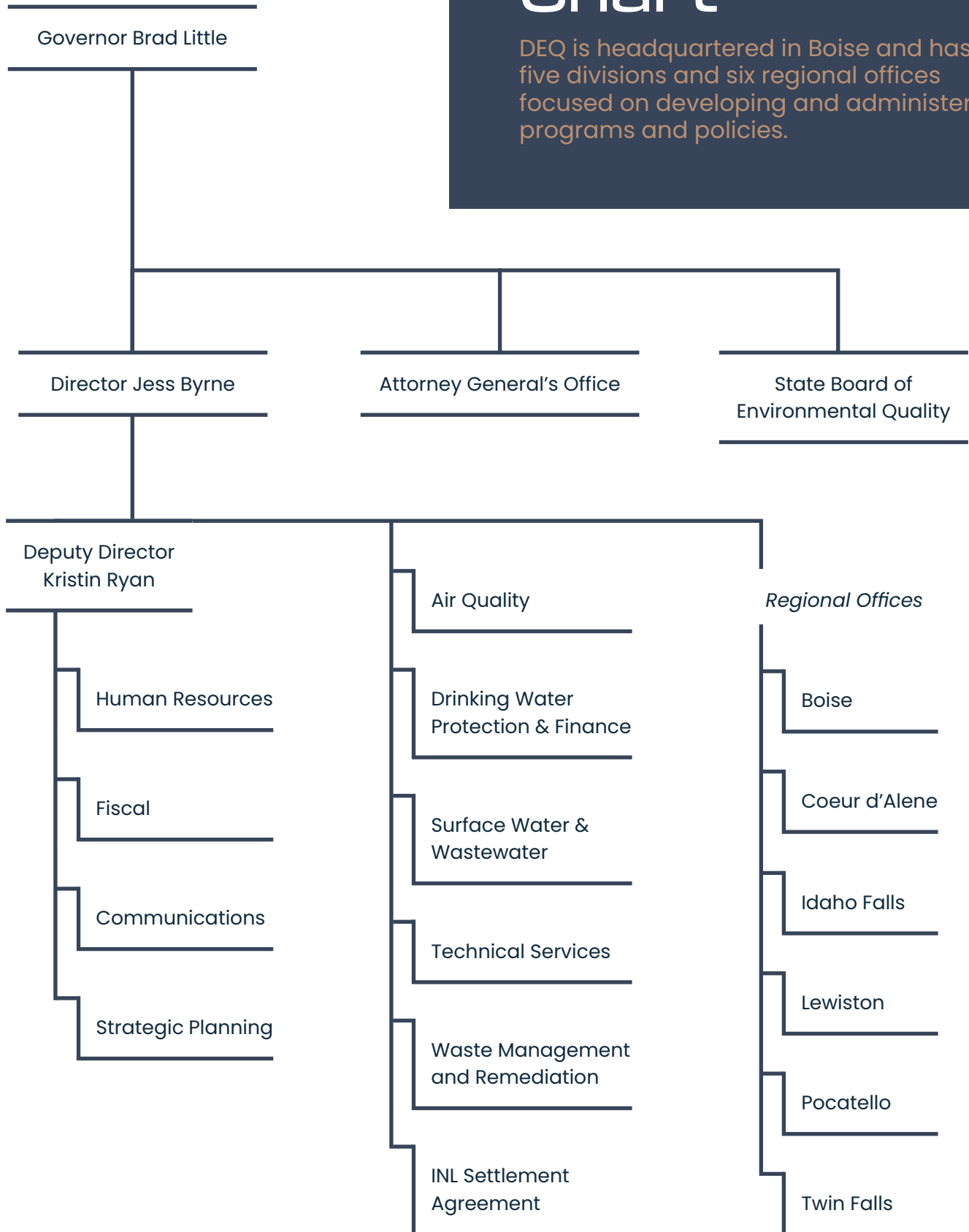
Protecting human health and the environment

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), established by the Idaho Environmental Protection and Health Act (Idaho Code 39-101 et seq.), protects human health and the environment.

DEQ implements and enforces delegated federal programs under the Clean Air, Clean Water, Safe Drinking Water, and Resource Conservation and Recovery Acts, and state environmental laws and rules. This regulatory responsibility covers activities that ensure Idaho's air, land, water, and citizens are protected from the adverse impacts of pollution.

Organizational Chart

DEQ is headquartered in Boise and has five divisions and six regional offices focused on developing and administering programs and policies.



GOALS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

GOALS 1 AND 2

Goal 1

USE BEST PRACTICES TO MAKE RECOGNIZABLE AND MEASURABLE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

Air

100% of monitored airsheds meet national ambient air quality standards.

TARGET- 100%

We maintain a statewide monitoring network and identify areas having air pollution problems.

Water

Increase assessed rivers and streams supporting beneficial uses.

TARGET - 38%

We assess surface water bodies to support completion of total maximum daily loads (TMDLs), a water quality improvement plan.

Waste

Reduce the number of known contaminated sites.

TARGET- 235

(10% reduction of the 2261 known, open contaminated sites).

This performance measure includes leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs) and general remediation sites.

Goal 2

PROVIDE OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE AS A TRUSTED SOURCE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

Permits

Increase the percentage of complete permit applications on initial submittal.

TARGET: 82%

Increasing complete applications requires providing clearer guidance and updating the submission process.

Compliance

Increase the compliance rate of inspected facilities through outreach and education.

TARGET 82%

Increasing compliance requires establishing relationships with regulated facilities and removing barriers.

Public Information

Increase accessibility of public records by implementing new systems and improving processes.

TARGET: REDUCE REQUESTS BY 5% ANNUALLY.

To reduce public information requests, DEQ will implement new public facing tools to improve record querying.

GOALS AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES

GOALS 3 AND 4

Goal 3

FOSTER A CULTURE
OF CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT

Permits

Increase the percentage of permits issued before deadline by updating and improving processing.

TARGET: 81%

DEQ will modernize the permitting process.

Data

Management

Increase the efficiency of monitoring, assessment, compliance and/or enforcement programs through development of improved data management and workflows.

**NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS
AND PROCESSES IMPROVED.**

DEQ will prioritize projects based on need, improvement in performance, and time to complete

Goal 4

ATTRACT, DEVELOP AND
RETAIN A QUALIFIED AND
COMPETENT WORKFORCE

Retention

There are two performance indicators:

Reduce the percentage of elective, non-retirement turnover in the agency.

TARGET - 11.7%

Increase the percentage of employees continuing past three years.

TARGET - IN DEVELOPMENT

Like many state agencies, DEQ has lost a significant number of experienced and trained technical staff over the past several years through retirements or, in many cases, resignations for higher-paying jobs in the private sector and other government agencies. While DEQ continues to retain a very capable and dedicated staff of environmental professionals, we need to enhance our ability to recruit, train, and reward well-educated and qualified scientists, engineers, analysts, and administrators.



Emerging Issues and Opportunities

On a 4-year horizon, issues may arise that are short-term or may lead to a shift in the agency's focus and priorities. By anticipating future challenges, DEQ will be better positioned to adjust if needed, while continuing to support our core functions and services. Emerging issues and opportunities are identified below.

Air Quality

SMOKE FROM WILDFIRES AND PRESCRIBED FIRES

Smoke from wildfires and prescribed fire use will continue to present a challenge for protecting air quality, safeguarding human health, and ensuring the ongoing vitality of Idaho communities through 2028 and beyond.

Changes in climate and the buildup of dead and dying material in our forests are combining to increase the amount of wildfire smoke Idahoans experience each year. Estimates from federal land management agencies with lands in Idaho suggest Idaho could see the number of acres treated annually with prescribed fire for forest health and wildfire protection triple over the next decade. Timber harvest rates are also expected to rise in Idaho over the coming years resulting in an increase of woody debris, or slash, that will be burned annually. The combination of increased wildfire smoke and prescribed fire smoke will add to the pressures that state, federal, and local programs face to manage smoke and proactively communicate with affected groups and communities.

Smoke, whether from wildfire or prescribed fire, is a public health concern. Community- based engagement efforts will be essential for DEQ to support individuals and communities who wish to implement Smoke-Ready concepts to protect their health. DEQ anticipates working directly with the public to help limit exposure to smoke using proactive measures. We will also continue to work directly with prescribed fire practitioners and State and Federal Land Managers to limit smoke impacts when fire is used for wildfire and forest health protection.

Drinking Water

PER- AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES

In preparation of EPA developing drinking water regulations for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) the Drinking Water Bureau developed a voluntary drinking water source sampling project to evaluate the presence of PFAS in Idaho's public drinking water. This monitoring complements the monitoring done under EPA's Third Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule, where 33 of Idaho's systems participated between 2013 and 2015 (none of these samples were over the method detection limit). Sampling under the Drinking Water Bureau's project began in April 2021 and will continue until emerging contaminant funding through EPA's Public Water System Supervision Grant is discontinued. EPA is also conducting further PFAS monitoring under the Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule which started in January of 2023 and runs through December of 2025.

In April 2024, EPA announced a final drinking water regulation for six PFAS chemicals in public drinking water systems. Those chemicals include PFOA, PFOS, PFNA, PFHxS, and GenX. Under this regulation community and non-community non-transient public water systems have until April of 2027 to complete their initial monitoring requirements under the rule and must comply with the maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) by April of 2029.

Waste

EPA's Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) cooperative agreement grants for states and territories funds activities that support long-term planning and data collection to achieve progress toward the National Recycling Goal, Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal, and to advance a circular economy for materials. These grants also support the state-led implementation of plans to advance post-consumer materials management. DEQ has received approximately \$730,000 in SWIFR federal funding to develop a statewide recycling and waste diversion plan. DEQ has begun the process of collecting data on waste types and volumes from landfills and waste haulers across the state. This information will provide the foundation for the statewide plan and assist with prioritization of waste diversion efforts such as post-consumer recycling and composting.



Other External Factors

- ↳ Population growth
- ↳ Emergency or other natural disasters
- ↳ Federal regulatory actions or mandates
- ↳ Changes to federal grants
- ↳ Availability of staff
- ↳ Availability of funding

EMERGING ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES