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Idaho Department of  
Environmental Quality

# 2025 REPORT TO CITIZENS



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# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I am thrilled to share the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ's) 2025 year-end report.

Going into my fifth year as DEQ's director, I have had a metaphorical front-row seat to the many changes that have taken place over the last few years. From the pandemic to political policies to population growth, we've seen a lot of shifts both locally and nationally. But despite these external factors—or maybe because of them—DEQ has remained steadfast in its commitment to Idaho's communities, businesses, and residents; doubling down on our core mission and focusing on delivering the highest level of service for our customers.

This year, we once again directed hundreds of millions of dollars to support clean water infrastructure across our state. This money helps ensure that all Idahoans have access to safe drinking water and reliable wastewater services, and communities have the technical and financial support they need to operate these systems effectively.

We completed a multiyear study to determine whether per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances—commonly known as PFAS—are present in local drinking water sources. This significant first step ensures that citizens have access to the data

they need to make informed decisions about their health.

Contamination cleanup remained a top DEQ priority this year. We made great strides in addressing potential contamination pathways in Idaho's legacy mining areas, including in the Bunker Hill Superfund Site and Triumph Mine Site. While cleanup work in both areas will remain ongoing into the foreseeable future, I am proud of the recent progress DEQ helped achieve in these communities.

Heading into 2026, DEQ will continue to focus on the state's priorities such as improving permitting timelines and reducing operational backlogs. We are working to adopt a permit by rule for specific industries to streamline air quality permit issuances and reduce administrative burdens, and we are establishing a statewide waste diversion plan to reduce the strain and cost of operating local landfills.

No one knows what the next five years will hold, but I know that our agency will continue to carry out its work with pragmatism and professionalism. As director, I am extremely proud to share our accomplishments with you, and I look forward to the next five years and beyond as we continue to protect human health and the quality of Idaho's air, land, and water.



# Fiscal year 2025 at a glance



Emergency responses supported

253



Wastewater and drinking water funding awarded

\$142,624,014



Drinking water system inspections completed

393



Water quality certifications Issued

39



Surface water quality improvement projects completed

39



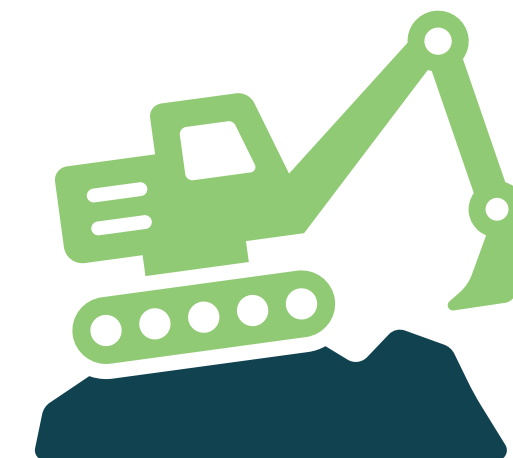
Air quality permits issued

173



Hazardous waste inspections conducted

123



Leaking underground tank cleanups completed

7



Outreach events directed and supported

62



# Evaluating the presence of PFAS in public water systems

In 2025, DEQ concluded a multiyear evaluation aimed at determining whether per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (commonly known as PFAS) are present in local drinking water sources.

Awareness around PFAS has grown over the last decade. These chemicals have been widely used for several decades and do not break down. Subsequently, they are found in water, air, and soil across the nation and the globe.

In 2024, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established maximum contaminant levels for some PFAS chemicals, and public water systems are required to comply with them by April 2029.

To help systems prepare, DEQ worked with operators across the state to collect voluntary ground and surface water source samples from participating public water systems, evaluating multiple PFAS analytes to generate a better picture of the presence of PFAS in Idaho drinking water sources.

The results obtained provide the most complete picture to-date of the location and concentration of PFAS in Idaho groundwater

and surface water sources used for drinking water. Several PFAS analytes are present in public water systems, with perfluorooctanoic acid and perfluorooctane sulfonate as the most common. The highest concentration of a single analyte detected was 29 parts per trillion, which is above EPA's maximum contaminant level, and the Treasure Valley had the highest number of detections and concentrations identified through the evaluation.

These findings shed light on the real challenge Idaho will face in addressing this human health concern, but they also provide a science-driven blueprint for how to reduce exposure. By identifying drinking water sources impacted by PFAS, customers have access to a host of data points specific to their water provider, and systems can access federal funding to help complete system improvements or changes to mitigate PFAS if present. Most importantly, Idaho public water systems will be able to move beyond general concerns around PFAS and take early and actionable steps towards reducing exposure and meeting forthcoming compliance deadlines.

# Reducing lead exposure risks for Pinehurst Elementary School students

Children, teachers, and guests at Pinehurst Elementary started the 2025 school year with a resurfaced playground, thanks to a partnership between DEQ, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Alta Science & Engineering, Stewart Contracting, and the Kellogg School District.

While the new surface enhanced the aesthetic and design of the playground, the real improvements took place below the surface.

Prior to 2025, the lack of drainage severely deteriorated the playground's asphalt. Contaminated soil laid directly underneath the asphalt, with heavy metals from historic

mining in the Silver Valley. The soil had never been remediated, and sampling results indicated contamination levels above federal thresholds. Poor drainage increased the risk for contamination underneath the playground to surface during rainstorm events, potentially exposing kids to unsafe levels of lead and other contaminants.

With funding from EPA, DEQ worked with partners to remove the existing asphalt and underlying contaminated soil, regraded the area to improve drainage, and established new barriers to eliminate this lead exposure pathway. The new playground ensures that Pinehurst Elementary's kids and guests can recreate safely outside.



# Cleaning up historic mining areas: Triumph Mine



DEQ advanced several cleanup priorities at the Triumph Mine Site this year, prioritizing infrastructure stabilization and soil and water cleanup in an effort to address historic mining contamination in the area. It is one example of many sites that DEQ is actively remediating to remove historic pollution, restore the environment, and mitigate risks to human health.

The Triumph Mine, located north of Hailey, Idaho, and the scenic Sawtooth Mountains, operated from the late 1800s until the 1950s, leaving behind high levels of heavy metals in the soil and water. State agencies have worked for over 30 years to clean up the area.

Using federal American Rescue Plan Act funds, DEQ and the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) began implementing three priority initiatives. First, the agencies began constructing an aboveground infiltration

basin to clean mine discharge water. This effort eliminates the need for long-term permits and offers immediate environmental benefits. Second, the agencies improved contaminant barriers on roads, ditches, and shoulders to reduce potential exposures to elevated levels of lead and arsenic. These actions will also enhance road conditions over the long term. Finally, DEQ and IDL continued a decades-long effort to stabilize the entrance to the mine by adding retaining walls, improving drainage infrastructure, repairing fences, and removing abandoned pipes. Collectively, this work will stabilize the mine entrance and maintain the mine's discharge water drainage system.

From reducing contamination in groundwater to managing erosion, this work will deliver significant short- and long-term environmental benefits and protect human health.

# Supporting economic growth and job creation

DEQ recently issued an air quality permit to construct for one of Idaho's flagship companies this year, approving Micron Technology, Inc.'s multi-billion-dollar semiconductor fabrication plant in Southeast Boise.

The plant is expected to begin operation by 2027 and will make dynamic random-access memory, or DRAM, which is used in smartphones, computers and other devices to temporarily store data as they function. Micron is the only manufacturer of DRAM in the country.

DEQ approved the pre-permit construction application in August 2023, and the final permit was issued in June 2025, a remarkable achievement given the complexity and scope of the permit. To achieve

these efficiencies, DEQ worked with Micron to ensure the company could satisfy several permit conditions prior to construction, a process known as pre-permit construction approval. This allowed Micron to begin construction over a year earlier than would have been allowed under DEQ's standard permit to construct process, which requires permittees to wait until the final permit is issued before commencing construction.

By utilizing a streamlined permitting process without compromising environmental standards, DEQ helped accelerate a major investment in Idaho's future. And as a result of this balanced approach, Idaho as a whole will benefit from local high-paying jobs and will continue to grow as a leader in advanced manufacturing.





Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

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