



Mayor Robert E. Simison

City Council Members:

John Overton, President

Anne Little Roberts, Vice President

Brian Whitlock

Liz Strader

Doug Taylor

Luke Cavener

Department of Environmental Quality

Attn: Tyler Fortunati

1410 N. Hilton

Boise, ID 83706

April 14, 2026

RE: Negotiated Rule Making – Drinking Water Program Fees

Dear Mr. Fortunati,

The State has initiated a negotiated rulemaking process to reassess and update the fee structure to cover current and anticipated funding shortfalls and is seeking input from water systems. The City of Meridian appreciates the opportunity to provide input on proposed modifications to the current fee structure and recognizes the importance of maintaining Primacy and addressing funding shortfalls to sustain services provided by the State Drinking Water Program.

The City strongly supports maintaining Idaho primacy over the Drinking Water Program. The Idaho Drinking Water Program provides important public health protections and regulatory assistance throughout Idaho.

The City recognizes the Program's financial challenge and supports efforts to close the funding gap, providing the solution preserves equity across systems. The City also supports keeping the fee increases as low as possible to meet the needs of the program. We appreciate the efficiencies that DEQ has implemented and are supportive of additional efficiencies to keep rates as low as possible.

For Meridian, with approximately 46,000 service connections, the proposed increase equates to an estimated additional \$115,100-\$138,000 annual increase (depending on the method used)—which is significant for our customers.

Comment #1:

The City supports the Flat Rate for All Tiers option of the proposed rules for several reasons.

- This proposal simplifies the fee structure, making it more straightforward for systems to plan.
- This proposal is equitable, spreading costs evenly across all systems in Idaho.
- This proposal equates to a lower financial impact to most systems of all sizes (\$5.50/connection compared to \$6-10/connection).

Comment #2:

The City supports the removal of the minimum and maximum fee caps. To maintain equity between systems and simplicity of the rate structure, it makes sense to remove these thresholds. Caps can artificially set rates too low for some systems and conversely too high for others. If the fees are truly based on connection count, without caps or limits, that maintains fairness and equity.

Comment #3:

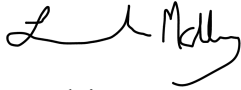
The City supports an extended timeline for implementation to allow systems to budget for these increases as part of their budget cycle.

Comment #4:

The City supports the addition of late fees for payments not received by the scheduled due date.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on this important rulemaking.

Sincerely,



Laurelei McVey
Public Works Director
City of Meridian