

**From:** Andrew Patterson < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 15, 2026 1:18 PM  
**To:** Tyler Fortunati <[Tyler.Fortunati@deq.idaho.gov](mailto:Tyler.Fortunati@deq.idaho.gov)>  
**Subject:** Drinking Water Program Fees Proposed Changes

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Good Afternoon:

I am writing to formally oppose the proposed DEQ Water Fee increases. While we understand the necessity of clean water standards, the timing and scale of these fee hikes pose an existential threat to small, rural districts. Over the past 18 months, our operational costs have already surged by more than 25%. Adding increased DEQ testing mandates and higher administrative fees creates a cumulative burden that is simply no longer manageable. As a rural district, we have a limited ratepayer base; we cannot continue to pass these compounding costs onto residents who are already facing significant economic pressure.

As a representative of a small, rural water district, I strongly oppose the proposed fee increases. Our community is currently at a breaking point. Between the rising costs of required DEQ testing and a 25% spike in general operations over the last year and a half, our budget is stretched thin. These fee increases function as an unfunded mandate that forces us to choose between infrastructure stability and rate affordability for our citizens. We urge the DEQ to consider the disproportionate impact these rules have on rural systems compared to larger urban utilities.

**Andrew L. Patterson**  
*Operations Manager,  
Huckleberry Bay Sewer & Water  
Fire Chief,  
North of the Narrows Fire District*

541-292-9784

**From:** terry decker < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 15, 2026 2:38 PM  
**To:** Tyler Fortunati <[Tyler.Fortunati@deq.idaho.gov](mailto:Tyler.Fortunati@deq.idaho.gov)>  
**Cc:** Huckleberry Bay Utilities < >  
**Subject:** Drinking Water Program Fees Proposed Changes

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I am writing on behalf of Huckleberry Bay Water System in response to the IRWA request for input on proposed DEQ fee changes. We are a small recreational water district so any increase in fees impacts our budget, our ability to cover operational costs and invest in infrastructure. We would obviously prefer no fee increases but are well aware that costs for all continue to climb.

Of the two options, we prefer 58.01.08 Draft DW Fee Rule for All Tiers.

Draft DW Fee Rule Revision for % Increase for No SRF is more costly for us, and seems to unfairly punish us for NOT having a loan. We run on a tight budget but meet all DEQ requirements, consistently invest where we can in system improvements and have not borrowed money to do so. Why would systems with an SRF be excluded from this option? What would they pay? Why would we pay under this structure?

We appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on the proposals.

Thank you,

Terry Decker

Melanie Westerkamp

Huckleberry Bay Water Managers