

**From:** Bill Maughan < >  
**Sent:** Wednesday, April 15, 2026 5:14 PM  
**To:** Tyler Fortunati <[Tyler.Fortunati@deq.idaho.gov](mailto:Tyler.Fortunati@deq.idaho.gov)>  
**Cc:**  
**Subject:** Drinking Water Program Fees Proposed Changes

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The Lewiston Orchards Irrigation District provides potable water service to a large number of connections within our service area and is required to pay annual drinking water system fees to the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. We understand the financial pressures resulting from reduced federal funding; however, the proposed increase—effectively doubling our annual fees—will have a direct and measurable impact on our ratepayers.

For our District, this change represents an approximate \$20,000 annual increase in operating costs. As a public utility, we operate on a cost-recovery basis and do not have discretionary revenue streams to absorb increases of this magnitude. As a result, the District will be required to adjust domestic water rates to recover these additional costs. These increases will be borne directly by our patrons, many of whom are on fixed or limited incomes. Higher water rates will place an added financial burden on households already facing rising costs for utilities, housing, and basic necessities. While the per-connection increase may appear modest at the state level, the cumulative effect on individual customers is significant, particularly in a community such as ours.

We encourage consideration of alternative funding strategies, phased implementation, or other mechanisms to mitigate the immediate impact on small and mid-sized systems like ours. Maintaining affordable access to safe drinking water is critical, and abrupt cost increases risk undermining that objective.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide input and respectfully request that the financial impacts to local systems and their customers be carefully weighed in any final decision.

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