

**Response to Comments – Docket No. 58-0108-2601: Drinking Water Fees
Negotiated Rulemaking Meeting No. 1 April 9, 2026**

Commenter	Rule Section	Comment Summary	DEQ Response
Lance & Marissa Heindel, Clear Creek Station	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	Comment was received prior to the April 8, 2026 negotiated rulemaking meeting. Commentor identified that they could not locate the proposal and did not understand what the funds would be used for.	Thank you for your comment. The Department decided not to propose specific changes to the fee rule and instead is working through what those changes should be via the negotiated rulemaking process with stakeholders. All materials and information related to this negotiated rulemaking effort can be accessed at https://www.deq.idaho.gov/rules-and-guidance/rulemaking/drinking-water-docket-no-58-0108-2601/ .
Princeton Lee, Water Department Superintendent, City of Blackfoot	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	See Appendix A, COMMENT 1	<p>Thank you for your comment. Over the last 30 years, the Drinking Water Program has been sufficiently funded through fees, and federal funding from EPA (PWSS Grant and set-asides from the SRF funding). For the last ~4 years, Congressionally-directed spending has reduced the base SRF capitalization grants received by states, which has in turn reduced the set-aside funding available to operate the Drinking Water Program. This shortage leaves the Drinking Water Program with a ~\$1.36M annual funding shortfall that must be addressed to maintain the program and the current services it provides.</p> <p>The Department decided not to initially propose specific changes to the fee rule and work through what those changes should be via the negotiated rulemaking process with stakeholders. All materials and information related to this negotiated rulemaking effort can be accessed at https://www.deq.idaho.gov/rules-and-guidance/rulemaking/drinking-water-docket-no-58-0108-2601/.</p> <p>The per-connection cost disparity you identified has been addressed through adoption of a uniform flat rate of \$100 per</p>

			system plus \$5.65 per connection under Section 007.02, eliminating the tiered structure that produced the cross-subsidization concern. Implementation is phased over two years to allow systems time to adjust local rates accordingly.
Lee C. Belt, City Clerk, City of Greenleaf	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	See Appendix A, COMMENT 2	Thank you for your comment. The proposed rule retains September 1 annual fee statement delivery under Section 007.04, ahead of the October 1 due date under Section 007.05, to align with political subdivision budget cycles. The two-year phased implementation under Section 007.02 \$100 plus \$3.00 per connection in Year 1, increasing to \$100 plus \$5.65 per connection in Year 2 provides a defined, predictable schedule for local budget planning purposes.
John Angell, Xylem	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	I'm fine with the changes, necessary given the circumstances.	Thank you for your comment.
Shelley Roberts, CEO, Idaho Rural Water Association	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	Members of our board of directors had a conversation about drinking water fees yesterday and asked a couple of questions I was unable to answer. Can you clarify how DEQ was funded before the drinking water fees were implemented in the 1990s? Also, can you provide more clarification about how the funds raised in the proposed fees will be utilized?	Thank you for your comment. Here's the information available on pre-1993 funding, back when DEQ was still a Division of IDHW: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In SFY93, the drinking water program received approximately \$950,000 from the Water Pollution Control Account. • In SFY93, the drinking water program received approximately \$685,000 from a federal EPA grant (I assume this is the Public Water System Supervision Grant, which was implemented in 1976). • The DWSRF did not come into existence until 1996 as part of the SDWA amendments enacted in August of 1996. • During the 1992 legislative session the legislature directed/informed DEQ and the DWAC that they would need to find/develop an alternative form of funding for the drinking water program (i.e., no more WPCA funding). This is where the initial fee effort was born out of.

			<p>Here's a breakdown of how the increased fee funding will be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To replace the funding that currently provided through the DWSRF set-asides. This is an effort to shore up the program's budget and keep it whole. We are not seeking to add additional personnel or operating costs with the funding above and beyond the typical inflationary costs the program experiences on existing personnel and services. • At a high level, the current DWSRF set-aside funding is used for (this is what the increase in fee costs would be used to cover): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Drinking water program, engineering, and support staff personnel time & fringe expenses ○ Funding for statewide rule workshops ○ Contractors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ IT developers for web-based applications ▪ SDWIS/CMDP contractor to help maintain & update these platforms as well as on-board labs & provide support services ▪ Health district contracts
Scott Youngblood, City of Chubbuck	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	I think changes to the fees sound reasonable. If the inflation goes away, then you should go back to the original fees.	Thank you for your comment.
Michael Rocco, Councilman, City of Kuna	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	See Appendix A, COMMENT 3	<p>Thank you for your comments. The proposed rule has been amended to address the overall preference for a flat fee rate regardless of system size and to include a phased fee increase.</p> <p>These fees would scale on an annual basis (assuming growth). DEQ issues drinking water fee invoices in September of each year, with the fee due October 1 of each year. PWS staff update the connection information each year ahead of the September invoice</p>

			<p>being developed. The annual drinking water fee would increase at the per connection rate for the number of connections the system was increased by. Those fees would only be increased and invoiced with the next fee year. DEQ doesn't charge additional fees at the time of system expansion.</p> <p>The Drinking Water Program is facing a significant federal funding cut that is detailed in this presentation. This proposal is to maintain the program's current budget by replacing the federal deficit with an increase in drinking water fees. This will allow the Drinking Water Program to maintain the existing services and primacy requirements the program is required to meet.</p>
Pam Smith, Fenn Community Water and Sewer	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	<p>Our community is small, with only 21 hook-ups and approximately 45 residents. While a hundred-dollar annual increase may seem minor, these funds are vital for a community of our size to maintain and improve our infrastructure.</p> <p>Based on the proposal, it appears these additional funds are designated solely for management costs. This increase would be more justifiable if it provided tangible benefits or improved support for our customers; however, the current plan appears to offer no such enhancements.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. The proposed fee increase will be used to maintain current program services and support for Idaho's public water systems. Without a fee increase the Department will not be able to sustain current service levels due to federal funding cuts.</p>
Laysn Berry, City Clerk, City of Craigmont	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	See Appendix A, COMMENT 4	<p>Thank you for your comments. This has been addressed under the proposed rule. The flat rate structure under Section 007.02 eliminates the prior tiered schedule. Phased implementation: \$100 plus \$3.00 per connection in Year 1, increasing to \$100 plus \$5.65</p>

			in Year 2 provides time to plan and adjust local rates. Systems with 250 or more connections may request quarterly installment payments under Section 007.05(c).
Michael Rocco, Councilman, City of Kuna	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	See Appendix A, COMMENT 5	<p>Thank you for your comments. Ultimately, we do see several invoicing frequencies from the various PWSs across the state (i.e., monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, annual). For the flat fee proposal, based on Kuna’s connections, the monthly impact would be the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$100 flat rate + \$5.65/connection = \$0.46/connection per month. <p>Growing systems would face an increased drinking water fee with each fee cycle. That impact exists with the current rule language, and the proposed rule language.</p>
David Waldron, P.E., City Engineer, City of Burley	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	I understand that a need for a fee increase is needed. I would request that you do the rate increases over several years so that we can have time to raise our rates over several years. Thanks for your consideration of this.	Thank you for your comments. This has been addressed under the proposed rule. The two-year phased implementation under Section 007.02 \$100 plus \$3.00 per connection in Year 1, increasing to \$100 plus \$5.65 per connection in Year 2 provides a defined, predictable schedule for local budget planning purposes.
Jarmila M. Cary, Finance Director Idaho, Veolia	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	<p>Revisions to IDEQ fee will require tariff change filings with the Idaho Public Utilities Commission and will take time to receive approval and to implement.</p> <p>If the rates do change, giving utilities as much time as possible before implementation will help. Thank you.</p>	Thank you for your comments. This has been addressed under the proposed rule. The two-year phased implementation under Section 007.02 \$100 plus \$3.00 per connection in Year 1, increasing to \$100 plus \$5.65 per connection in Year 2 provides a defined, predictable schedule for local budget planning purposes.
Steve Eisele, Board of Directors, Indian	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	Our piggy bank doesn't hold a lot of extra cash, but the price of everything is constantly changing. Yours should too. It	Thank you for your comments.

Village Water Users Association		<p>will hurt a bit, but it has to be.</p> <p>We have a new well to develop, a project under way, and I am hoping we'll be able to fund that with a Federal low interest loan, but it's a work in progress.</p> <p>I am ok with a raise, our treasurer might disagree, but still it has to happen. I will look forward to the outcome of the decision process.</p> <p>Thanks for the heads up.</p>	
Andrew L. Patterson, Operations Manager, Huckleberry Bay Sewer & Water	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	See Appendix A, COMMENT 6	Thank you for your comments. The flat rate structure under Section 007.02 eliminates the per-connection cost disparity and phased implementation provides time to adjust local rates incrementally. Section 007.09 adds a fee reduction and suspension provision ensuring fee collections do not exceed demonstrated program costs. The fee adjustment is necessary to replace federal DWSRF set-aside funding reductions that have created an approximately \$1.36 million annual program shortfall.
Jim Lund, Chief Operator, City of Kamiah	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	See Appendix A, COMMENT 7	Thank you for your comments. DEQ recognizes the particular challenges facing small rural communities with limited ratepayer bases and fixed-income residents. The flat rate structure under Section 007.02 eliminates the prior tiered schedule that placed disproportionately higher per-connection costs on smaller systems, and phased implementation of \$100 plus \$3.00 per connection in Year 1, increasing to \$100 plus \$5.65 in Year 2 is designed to provide systems time to plan and adjust local rates incrementally rather than absorbing the full increase at once.
Ken Acuff, City of Eagle	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	I am surprised that fees have remained the same since 1993. As much as we all	Thank you for your comments.

		<p>don't like increases long gaps like this are a lot more painful than yearly adjustments. It may have to catch up in phases for some systems to afford. We are in support of the changes that are needed to keep funding the process that is required for the protection of the public health.</p>	
<p>Steve Crane, Board Secretary, South River Water Association</p>	<p>IDAPA 58.01.08.007</p>	<p>We are a proponent of parity and review of the data provided in your presentation, it does appear that transient and discounts to larger systems in the existing fee structure does not provide parity.</p> <p>If the fees have to increase, we believe the flat rate annual fee and equal per connection fee is the fairest solution.</p> <p>I would also suggest an option where the proposed increase is staggered to increase incrementally over 1-5 years to minimize the impact to water systems most affected by the changes.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. These comments have been addressed under the proposed rule. A flat rate structure and equal per-connection fee has been incorporated into the proposed rule under Section 007.02, which adopts a uniform rate of \$100 per system plus \$5.65 per connection for all community and non-transient non-community PWSs, eliminating the tiered structure. The staggered increase is addressed through phased implementation of \$100 plus \$3.00 per connection in Year 1, increasing to \$100 plus \$5.65 in Year 2 to minimize impact on systems most affected by the change.</p>
<p>Terry Decker & Melanie Westerkamp, Huckleberry Bay Water Managers</p>	<p>IDAPA 58.01.08.007</p>	<p>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</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. A flat rate structure and equal per-connection fee has been incorporated into the proposed rule under Section 007.02, which adopts a uniform rate of \$100 per system plus \$5.65 per connection for all community and non-transient non-community PWSs, eliminating the tiered structure. The staggered increase is addressed through phased implementation of \$100 plus \$3.00 per connection in Year 1, increasing to \$100 plus</p>

		<p>climb.</p> <p>Of the two options, we prefer 58.01.08 Draft DW Fee Rule for All Tiers.</p>	<p>\$5.65 in Year 2 to minimize impact on systems most affected by the change.</p>
<p>Laurelei McVey, Public Works Director, City of Meridian</p>	<p>IDAPA 58.01.08.007</p>	<p>See Appendix A, Comment 8</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. These have been addressed under the proposed rule. A flat rate structure and equal per-connection fee has been incorporated into the proposed rule under Section 007.02, which adopts a uniform rate of \$100 per system plus \$5.65 per connection for all community and non-transient non-community PWSs, eliminating the tiered structure. The staggered increase is addressed through phased implementation of \$100 plus \$3.00 per connection in Year 1, increasing to \$100 plus \$5.65 in Year 2 to minimize impact on systems most affected by the change. the addition of late fees for delinquent payments is addressed under Section 007.06, which establishes a one-time late fee of the greater of \$50 or 10% of the total invoiced amount, not to exceed \$1,000, for any PWS more than 90 days delinquent.</p>
<p>Willard Maughan, Finance Director, Lewiston Orchards Irrigation District</p>	<p>IDAPA 58.01.08.007</p>	<p>See Appendix A, COMMENT 9</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. The phased implementation approach and move to a flat fee structure for all systems has been addressed under the proposed rule.</p>
<p>Amy Fealko, Finance Director, City of Salmon</p>	<p>IDAPA 58.01.08.007</p>	<p>See Appendix A, Comment 10</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. A flat rate structure and equal per-connection fee has been incorporated into the proposed rule under Section 007.02, which adopts a uniform rate of \$100 per system plus \$5.65 per connection for all community and non-transient non-community PWSs, eliminating the tiered structure. The staggered increase is addressed through phased implementation of \$100 plus \$3.00 per connection in Year 1, increasing to \$100 plus \$5.65 in Year 2 to minimize impact on systems most affected by the</p>

			change.
Michael Skreenock, Blanchard Cooperative Water Association	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	As a small cooperative, we would like to formally indicate our preference for the flat rate rule change. We believe this approach is the most suitable option for our organization’s current needs and situation.	Thank you for your comments. This has been addressed under the proposed rule. A flat rate structure and equal per-connection fee has been incorporated into the proposed rule under Section 007.02, which adopts a uniform rate of \$100 per system plus \$5.65 per connection for all community and non-transient non-community PWSs, eliminating the tiered structure.
Paul Tucker, District Manager, North Kootenai Water & Sewer District	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	North Kootenai Water District supports a fee increase to maintain primacy of the EPA Safe Drinking Water Act by the State of Idaho, as administered by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. The District does not support a fee increase to fund State Revolving Fund (SRF) programs benefiting infrastructure projects within the State of Idaho. The District does support funding of such SRF programs through Idaho tax revenue as administered by the State of Idaho.	Thank you for your comments and support for the program. The Department’s drinking water fees do not currently, nor under the proposed rule, support the State Revolving Fund (SRF) program. The fee increase is intended solely to replace federal Drinking Water SRF set-aside funding, which has historically helped fund the drinking water program. Set-asides are a portion of the DWSRF that states are allowed to use for program costs.
Michael Martin, Water Superintendent, City of Orofino	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	On behalf of the City of Orofino , we do understand the challenges that face IDEQ with the decrease in federal funding to support the operations of IDEQ. The City of Orofino is supportive of the role of IDEQ with primacy in Idaho and prefer that role over EPA taking over. Reading through the proposals the least burden that would have to be passed onto the citizens would be the flat rate proposal and would be less of	Thank you for your comments. This has been addressed under the proposed rule. A flat rate structure and equal per-connection fee has been incorporated into the proposed rule under Section 007.02, which adopts a uniform rate of \$100 per system plus \$5.65 per connection for all community and non-transient non-community PWSs, eliminating the tiered structure.

		an impact. I hope this input is helpful. Thank you for all IDEQ does for the state.	
Thomas Wheeler, President, Mudlake & Terreton Sewer and Water Board	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	<p>M&T SEWER AND WATER is strongly opposed to any additional fees levied against the public for the sole purpose of funding an Idaho State regulatory agency.</p> <p>In addition to the above objection, the District currently has the following concerns with this specific proposal;</p> <p>1) as purposed, the new rule would increase M&T's current assessment by 100%.</p> <p>2) as purposed this rule unfairly places a higher cost burden on the smaller rural districts than on large districts. For example, our district would pay \$10 per connection, while Idaho Falls would only pay \$6 per connection. That is a huge disparity.</p>	Thank you for your comments. The fee cost per connection disparity has been addressed through the flat rate approach under the proposed rule. Section 007.02 adopts a uniform flat rate of \$100 per system plus \$5.65 per connection for all community and non-transient non-community PWSs, eliminating the tiered structure and ensuring all systems pay the same per-connection rate regardless of size. Phased implementation of \$100 plus \$3.00 per connection in Year 1, increasing to \$100 plus \$5.65 in Year 2 is designed to reduce the immediate impact on systems most affected by the change. The Department acknowledges your opposition.
Kyle Marine, Water Department Director, City of Coeur d'Alene	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	See Appendix A, Comment 11	Thank you for your comments. Concerns regarding consistency of guidance and equitable application of requirements have been noted and will be shared with program leadership. Regarding the fee increase, the flat rate structure under Section 007.02 eliminates the prior per-connection cost disparity, implementation is phased over two years, and Section 007.09 ensures fee collections remain tied to demonstrated program costs through a fee reduction and suspension provision.
Courtne	IDAPA	See Appendix A, Comment 12	Thank you for your comments. The Department will work with the

Dawson, Utility Policy Analyst, Idaho Rural Water Association	58.01.08.007		<p>Drinking Water Advisory Committee to better convey program funding status on an annual basis and work with the Committee to evaluate and assess if, or when, future fee increases are appropriate. Additionally:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The phased fee increase approach has been addressed under the proposed rule. • The Department has included draft language that would address the potential excess fees funding under the proposed rule.
Joel Mottishaw	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	See Appendix A, Comment 13	Thank you for your comments. DEQ has examined program costs and staffing and determined that the proposed adjustment is necessary to maintain the minimum service levels and primacy obligations required under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The increase replaces reduced federal DWSRF set-aside funding and does not expand program operations or add personnel beyond current levels.
Sandra Eimers, Owner, Country Court Community	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	I know I share the same view as other small, rural communities with respect to trying to keep expenses and costs to a minimum to maintain rental rate affordability for our rural communities. It is of major importance to us that the assistance of state organizations like Idaho Rural Water Association be maintained in an affordable way in the absence of federal funding. In this regard, I feel the proposed increase in fees—particularly in light of the fact that these fees have not been increased for many years—is a	Thank you for your comments and support.

		sound investment to assure assistance with DEQ mandatory requirements.	
Brent Ollerton, Water Treatment Operator, City of Dover	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	See Appendix A, Comment 14	Thank you for your comments. The flat fee structure and phased implementation of fee increases has been addressed under the proposed rule.
Branden Rose, District Administrator, Hayden Lake Irrigation District	IDAPA 58.01.08.007	See Appendix A, Comment 15	Thank you for your comments. The phased implementation of fee increases has been addressed under the proposed rule.

Appendix A

COMMENT 1

From: Princeton lee <plee@cityofblackfoot.org>
Sent: Tuesday, April 7, 2026 11:14 AM
To: Tyler Fortunati <Tyler.Fortunati@deq.idaho.gov>
Cc: Graham Anderson <ganderson@cityofblackfoot.org>; Mayor <mayor@cityofblackfoot.org>
Subject: Drinking water fee questions

Hi Tyler,

I have several thoughts on the proposed fee increases to the DEQ drinking water fees. I am not opposed to fee increases when needed. Why has it taken 30 years to evaluate the funding needs of the DEQ and smaller increments made over that time frame? Modest increases are easier to absorb and budget for instead of a 250% increase. Also why is the minimum fee for more than the proposed rate increase of the minimum number of service connections? That math indicates the systems that are right at or just above the threshold will be subsidizing larger systems. My examples are taken from the slides presented by Cassadra. The math works out to $\$8.25/\text{connection}(3664) = \$30,228$. Why is there essentially a \$10,000.00 subsidy being paid by those systems? It would seem to me that the minimum connection number should be revised to equal the minimum fee, or the fee is adjusted to reflect actual costs. I look forward to seeing how the fee structure develops to be reasonable and fair to all water systems and adequately funds the department.

Regards,



Princeton Lee

Superintendent

Water Department

Phone:

208-785-8608

Email:

plee@cityofblackfoot.org

www.cityofblackfoot.org

COMMENT 2

From: Greenleaf City Hall <cityhall@greenleaf-idaho.us>

Sent: Monday, April 13, 2026 4:17 PM

To: Tyler Fortunati <Tyler.Fortunati@deq.idaho.gov>

Cc: Doug Amick <douglas.amick@greenleaf-idaho.us>; Mayor <mayor@greenleaf-idaho.us>;
Carrie Huggins - Work <treasurer@greenleaf-idaho.us>; Lance Sayers <lsayers@idahocities.org>

Subject: Drinking Water Fees Feedback

Hi Tyler!

It is important for DEQ to remember that political subdivisions of the State, including all of DEQ's municipal water systems, are on an Oct-Sep fiscal year per Idaho Code, not the State's Jul-Jun fiscal year or a Calendar fiscal year.

It is important for DEQ to implement any Drinking Water Fees increase in a manner that fits the political subdivision budgeting cycle. Communication of the increase needs to occur in the Spring (April is ideal) of the year *BEFORE* the fee increase is implemented for payment to DEQ, so that political subdivisions can get the increase into the next year's budget early and start collecting fees to pay for the increase starting in October with the start of the fiscal year the increase is due for payment to DEQ - Remember, local rates will have to be increased to cover this DEQ mandated expense.

Please don't force your constituent municipal water systems to pull from reserves on the water side of DEQ's house because no thought was in place at DEQ for budgetary timing.

Your municipal constituents that also have wastewater treatment systems are currently suffering this fiscal year from un-communicated and therefore un-budgeted PFAS testing requirements which were un-expectedly sprung upon wastewater systems by DEQ after the fiscal year started.

Nobody likes being suddenly hit with an unanticipated government mandated expense that they have to pull from saving to pay... Timing is important.

Mayor and Doug - DEQ is looking at an increase in Drinking Water Fees invoiced to water systems to pay for DEQ's regulatory program (funds state primacy). I don't believe amount of increase has been determined yet. Link to DEQ presentation as given in today's AIC weekly overview is at:

https://458rl1jp.r.us-east-1.awstrack.me/L0/https:%2F%2Fcdn.ymaws.com%2Fidahocities.org%2Fresource%2Fresmgr%2Fweekly_overview%2F2026%2Fnm_fees_updated_1_.pdf/1/0100019d8888aa61-2cc06929-0a6a-456b-828d-4f10e6bd3e2a-000000/CRsX0ZDN9xsn7BjmzeDqB0A1OME=473

Thank you,

Lee C. Belt

Greenleaf City Clerk

208/454-0552 phone

208/454-7994 fax

208/880-4061 cell

COMMENT 3

From: [Michael Rocco](#)
To: [Tyler Fortunati](#)
Cc: [Adam Wenger](#); [Jared Empey](#)
Subject: DEQ Drinking Water Fee Rulemaking Feedback
Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 1:50:57 PM

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Good afternoon Tyler,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide early feedback on the proposed drinking water fee adjustments.

As a councilmember in a fast-growing community, I am particularly interested in understanding how the proposed fee structure will affect both existing ratepayers and the cost of expanding systems to serve new development.

From my perspective, a few points would be helpful to better evaluate the proposal:

- What is the anticipated impact on a per-connection or per-household basis?
- How will the fees scale for systems that are actively expanding infrastructure?
- Will the increase be phased in, or implemented all at once?
- Are there specific service or regulatory improvements tied to the additional revenue?

As we continue to plan and invest in system expansion, understanding how these types of fee changes scale with growth and timing is important from both a financial and policy standpoint.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment, and I appreciate your outreach to local communities at this early stage.

Michael Rocco
Kuna City Council

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COMMENT 4

From: [City of Craigmont](#)
To: [Tyler Fortunati](#)
Subject: Drinking Water Program Fees Proposed Changes
Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 3:39:21 PM

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To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the City of Craigmont, I am writing to provide input regarding the proposed revisions to the drinking water program fee schedule under IDAPA 58.01.08.

We understand that the current fee structure has remained unchanged since 1993 and that the purpose of these fees is to support the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's implementation of the Safe Drinking Water Act and ensure continued protection of public health. We also recognize that rising program costs and anticipated reductions in federal funding necessitate a review of the existing fee structure.

While we appreciate DEQ's efforts to maintain adequate regulatory oversight and program sustainability, we have concerns regarding how the proposed changes may impact small, rural communities such as Craigmont.

Small public water systems operate with limited financial resources and a relatively small customer base. As a result, increases in program fees-- particularly if significant or implemented all at once--can create challenges for maintaining affordability for residents while continuing to meet regulatory requirements.

We respectfully offer the following considerations:

- **Impact on Small and Rural Systems:** Fee adjustments should account for the limited rate base and financial capacity of small communities. A one-size-fits-all approach may disproportionately affect smaller systems.
- **Per-Connection Fee Structure:** Transitioning to a flat per-connection fee should be carefully evaluated to ensure it does not unintentionally shift a greater financial burden onto smaller systems with fewer connections.
- **Revenue Cap Adjustments:** Any changes to revenue caps should be clearly justified and structured in a way that maintains equity across system sizes and classifications.
- **Billing and Payment Requirements:** While electronic billing and payment

options may improve efficiency, flexibility should remain for communities and customers who may have limited access to or preference for non-digital methods.

- **Phased Implementation:** If fee increases are necessary, a phased or incremental approach would allow local governments time to plan, budget, and communicate changes to residents.

We value DEQ's role in protecting public health and supporting Idaho's drinking water systems, and we appreciate the opportunity to participate in this rulemaking process. We encourage continued engagement with rural communities to ensure that any changes are both sustainable for the program and equitable for the communities it serves.

Thank you for your consideration.

--
City of Craigmont
Laysn Berry
City Clerk
208-924-5432

COMMENT 5

From: [Michael Rocco](#)
To: [Tyler Fortunati](#)
Cc: [Adam Wenger](#); [Jared Empey](#)
Subject: Re: DEQ Drinking Water Fee Rulemaking Feedback
Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 4:09:19 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

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Thank you again for the detailed response, this is very helpful.

Based on the per-connection figures you provided, it may be helpful to frame the typical household impact in monthly terms, as that is often how residents experience these types of changes.

Given that implementation timing is still under consideration, a phased approach would be helpful from a municipal perspective to better align with local budget cycles, particularly for communities experiencing ongoing growth.

One additional question, have you evaluated how the proposed structure may affect rapidly growing systems compared to those with stable connection counts?

Thanks again for your time and responsiveness.

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From: Tyler Fortunati <Tyler.Fortunati@deq.idaho.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 2:18:52 PM
To: Michael Rocco <mrocco@kunaaid.gov>
Cc: Adam Wenger <AWenger@kunaaid.gov>; Jared Empey <JEmpey@kunaaid.gov>
Subject: RE: DEQ Drinking Water Fee Rulemaking Feedback

Councilman Rocco,

Thank you for your comments and feedback. Below are my responses to your immediate questions.

- What is the anticipated impact on a per-connection or per-household basis? DEQ currently has two proposed fee structures out for comment. Those can be accessed at <https://www.deq.idaho.gov/rules-and-guidance/rulemaking/drinking-water-docket-no-58-0108-2601/> under the "Negotiated Rule Documents and Meeting Presentations" accordion. One proposal is a \$100 flat rate per system plus \$5.50 per connection. The second only has a per connection fee, and for Kuna, the current proposal would be \$6.00 per connection. Base

on the information provided by your public water system (PWS) staff, Kuna currently serves 11,363 connections.

- How will the fees scale for systems that are actively expanding infrastructure? These fees would scale on an annual basis (assuming growth). DEQ issues drinking water fee invoices in September of each year, with the fee due October 1 of each year. PWS staff update the connection information each year ahead of the September invoice being developed. The annual drinking water fee would increase at the per connection rate for the number of connections the system was increased by. Those fees would only be increased and invoiced with the next fee year. DEQ doesn't charge additional fees at the time of system expansion.
- Will the increase be phased in, or implemented all at once? This hasn't been determined. The current proposal does not have a phased schedule. DEQ will seek feedback from the stakeholder group at our next negotiated rulemaking meeting on May 8th on this topic. DEQ is committed to working with stakeholders on what will work and is cognizant of providing municipalities and other entities appropriate timing to adjust to fee increases in line with their fiscal year.
- Are there specific service or regulatory improvements tied to the additional revenue? The Drinking Water Program is facing a significant federal funding cut that is detailed in this presentation <https://www2.deq.idaho.gov/admin/LEIA/api/document/download/24779>. This proposal is to maintain the program's current budget by replacing the federal deficit with an increase in drinking water fees. This will allow the Drinking Water Program to maintain the existing services and primacy requirements the program is required to meet.

If you have any additional questions I would be happy to provide further clarification. We look forward to working with the City of Kuna and our other program stakeholders on this important rulemaking effort.

Sincerely,



Tyler Fortunati

Drinking Water Bureau Chief

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

1410 N Hilton, Boise, ID 83706

P: (208) 373-0140

www.deq.idaho.gov

COMMENT 6

From: [Andrew Patterson](#)
To: [Tyler Fortunati](#)
Subject: Drinking Water Program Fees Proposed Changes
Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 1:17:58 PM

CAUTION: This email originated outside the State of Idaho network. Verify links and attachments BEFORE you click or open, even if you recognize and/or trust the sender. Contact your agency service desk with any concerns.

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

COMMENT 7

From: [Jim Lund](#)
To: [Tyler Fortunati](#)
Cc: [Genese Simler](#); [Mike Tornatore](#); [Stuart Bryant](#)
Subject: Rule: Fee Changes
Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 1:47:45 PM

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Hi Tyler

As a public comment I would like to interject this:

I recognize the states position on increased fees; the problem is small communities are struggling already to meet the requests and rule changes to the permitting proposed by DEQ and EPA.

Our communities are small and most of our constituents are on a fixed income, or some limited amount of income. As rural communities do not have the base population that supports higher fees that we have to pass on to our customers.

This comes at a time when we are being hit with high inflation and costs associated with infrastructure deterioration.

I appreciate the lack of funding from the Federal government is making it harder to continue to run the status quo but as with our town we have to make do with what we have and figure out what's going to be the priority.

Sincerely

Jim Lund
Chief Operator
City of Kamiah
Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator
WWT3-24454
WWC3-24463
DWD1-25581
DWT1-25633

(208)217-7514



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.

Public Works Department ■ 33 E. Broadway Avenue, Suite 200, Meridian, ID 83642
Phone 208-898-5500 ■ www.meridiancity.org

Comment #3:

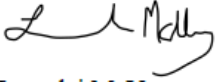
The City supports an extended timeline for implementation to allow systems to budget for these increases as part of their budget cycle.

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "L. McVey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Laurelei McVey
Public Works Director
City of Meridian

COMMENT 9

From: [Bill Maughan](#)
To: [Tyler Fortunati](#)
Cc: barneymetz@loid.net
Subject: Drinking Water Program Fees Proposed Changes
Date: Wednesday, April 15, 2026 5:14:32 PM

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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.

Willard Maughan
Financial Officer, Lewiston Orchards Irrigation District
208-553-5196

Comment 10

From: [Amy Fealko](#)
To: [Tyler Fortunati](#)
Subject: Drinking Water Program Fees Proposed Changes
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2026 8:59:23 AM

CAUTION: This email originated outside the State of Idaho network. Verify links and attachments BEFORE you click or open, even if you recognize and/or trust the sender. Contact your agency service desk with any concerns.

The City of Salmon opposes proposed increased fees to be passed along to local districts. As an enterprise system, we would then have to pass these fees onto our customers. Our rates have already increased significantly in the last few years to pay for maintaining our aging water infrastructure. We are in the middle of an almost \$8 million project, partially funded by loans and partially by grant monies through USDA. Salmon has a high percentage of low to moderate income households, and with current inflation on everything from groceries to fuel, this extra burden to citizens for clean water should not have to be faced by the local communities.

DEQ serves a need for keeping our water safe, and I'm disappointed that their federal funding is going to be cut since the environment is not a priority for this administration. It would be nice to have the corporations and other large pollutants in the country make up for the decreased federal funding.

Thank you,

Amy Fealko

Finance Director
City of Salmon
208.742.1315

Comment 11

From: [MARINE, KYLE](#)
To: [Tyler Fortunati](#)
Cc: [POELSTRA, GLEN](#)
Subject: Comments for Drinking Water Fees
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2026 3:04:46 PM

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I believe DEQ has been making efforts to repair relationships with water purveyors, and I appreciate those efforts. However, there is still significant work to be done. A substantial fee increase at this time would likely strain those relationships further. Many water system operators primarily interact with DEQ as an enforcement agency rather than a partner or resource. Because of this, some systems are hesitant to reach out for assistance due to concerns that doing so may lead to additional requirements, violations, or increased project costs.

In my experience, and through conversations with operators throughout the region, many systems that are struggling often seek guidance from peers before contacting DEQ. I consistently encourage them to reach out to DEQ for assistance, but the common perception is that enforcement actions are more likely than collaborative problem-solving. Often, the only time systems hear from their regulator is when they are already in violation or during a sanitary survey. Strengthening this relationship is important, and a significant fee increase will make that effort more difficult. I have also been told by operators that the fee increase would be worth it if DEQ would simply leave them alone, which highlights the current challenges in these relationships.

There are also concerns regarding consistency within DEQ. At times, different branches or staff provide conflicting guidance, which can create confusion and lead to unnecessary costs. I have experienced this firsthand and have documentation supporting these inconsistencies. Our goal is always to work collaboratively with DEQ and be a strong partner; however, these challenges make it difficult to support a substantial fee increase at this time.

Additionally, there have been instances where our system has been required to comply with certain requirements while other municipalities were not held to the same standard. I am hesitant to formally raise these concerns, as I do not want to create hardship for other systems, but the inconsistencies are difficult to overlook. While there are many knowledgeable and helpful staff within DEQ, local representatives are often required to follow direction from management, which can limit flexibility and collaboration at the local level.

From a broader perspective, systems that are well-managed and proactive often require minimal regulatory involvement, while struggling systems naturally require more time and resources from DEQ. Although developing a fee structure based on time spent may be difficult, it is important to recognize that efficient systems often have limited interaction with

DEQ outside of routine requirements.

There have also been situations where additional licensing or requirements were pursued at significant cost, only to later learn they were not necessary. Our engineering partners have expressed similar concerns regarding changing or unclear requirements. In some cases, these added requirements have resulted in substantial costs that could have otherwise been invested directly into system improvements.

I would also note that when enforcement issues arise that require presentation to City Council or a governing board, we have requested DEQ participation or support, but unfortunately this involvement has not always been available. Greater collaboration in these situations could help foster stronger partnerships and improve outcomes.

If approved, it appears that the cost of public drinking water assessments will likely double. While I understand and generally support reasonable increases as costs continue to rise, this proposed increase appears excessive and will impact all of our users, some more than others. Most utility boards and councils are already operating under tight budgets due to rising costs for materials, labor, and infrastructure improvements. Increasing regulatory fees will force utilities to either pass those costs on to customers or pull funding away from needed infrastructure projects and system improvements.

I have also spoken with several operators across the region, including some in Southern Idaho, who share similar concerns. Many have indicated that their governing boards and councils are also opposed to this increase. Some operators have expressed hesitation to submit comments due to concerns about potential repercussions for voicing disagreement.

I want to be clear that we value our relationship with DEQ and want to continue building a strong, collaborative partnership. There are many dedicated and knowledgeable individuals within the agency, and we appreciate their work. However, there are also areas where improvements could be made on both sides.

For these reasons, I cannot support the proposed fee increase at this time.

Thank you for your time and the opportunity to comment.

Kyle Marine
City of Coeur d'Alene
Water Dep Director
Office: 208-769-2211
kmarine@cdaid.org

Comment 12



April 16, 2026

via email: tyler.fortunati@deq.idaho.gov

Mr. Tyler Fortunati
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
1410 N. Hilton
Boise, ID 83706

Subject: Docket No. 58-0108-2601 Drinking Water Fees - 4/9/2026 Stakeholder Meeting

Dear Mr. Fortunati:

The Idaho Rural Water Association (IRWA) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization established in 1987 to provide training and technical assistance to public drinking water and wastewater utilities in Idaho that serve communities with populations under 10,000. Due to the rural nature of our state, IRWA currently serves over 90 percent of public drinking water systems. Our membership includes more than 385 drinking water utility systems and is governed by a seven-member, volunteer board of directors elected from among our member systems.

These member utilities bear the vital responsibility of complying with all applicable federal and state water and environmental regulations while ensuring safe and reliable drinking water services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Idaho's rural and small communities work diligently to safeguard public health and protect the environment by maintaining these essential services.

IRWA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on behalf of our membership regarding the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ) rulemaking for Drinking Water Fees, Docket No. 58-0108-2601. IRWA participated in the stakeholder meeting held on April 9, 2026, and supports DEQ's efforts to engage utilities and other stakeholders as the Department evaluates program funding needs and potential fee adjustments.

IRWA recognizes that maintaining DEQ's regulatory primacy over public drinking water systems is important and beneficial for Idaho's water utilities. The technical assistance and compliance support provided by DEQ under the Safe Drinking Water Act is especially critical for small, rural water systems. Our Association is concerned that shifting primacy from DEQ to EPA would reduce the effectiveness of the drinking water program delivery for Idahoans and ultimately increase the cost of regulatory compliance for local water utilities. In light of projected

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www.idrwa.org

decreases in federal grant funding that help fulfill program costs, IRWA recognizes the importance of stakeholders and agency representatives working together to keep Idaho's program adequately funded and sustainable over time.

Since the adoption of the current fee structure in 1993 and implementation in 1996, fees have not increased. The program originally targeted to generate \$1 million in annual revenue for DEQ equates to approximately \$2.29 million today when adjusted for inflation, reflecting a substantial erosion in purchasing power over time. IRWA respectfully requests to prevent future challenges to maintain solvency within the Drinking Water Program, DEQ develop and implement fee adjustments more frequently to ensure future changes are less severe, more aligned with cost-of-living assessments and adjustments, and more predictable for water systems.

To address immediate funding shortfalls, our Association encourages a phased approach of smaller program fee adjustments over a 2- to 4-year period in order for water systems to plan and budget accordingly for increased costs. Idaho's small, rural drinking water systems operate under constraining financial pressures and rarely have the financial agility to absorb additional burdens without careful planning. Drinking water fee adjustments will be ultimately passed from the utility to the consumer; utilities will need time to adjust user rates appropriately to ensure all parties are properly informed and involved in the process of implementation.

Considering the amount of federal funding received annually by DEQ's Drinking Water Program may vary significantly from year to year based on the political environment of the federal government, IRWA emphasizes the importance of establishing a clear mechanism to return program funds to water systems if the agency finds themselves with excess revenue. Establishing a reasonable reserve to maintain in the Drinking Water Fee account is prudent; additionally necessary are fee discounts and refunds to be implemented when the Drinking Water Program accumulates excess balances as a result of changes in federal funding or other factors. Ensuring fee collections align with actual program costs will be crucial to maintain transparency and trust between DEQ and the public water systems they serve.

Over the last 33 years, DEQ's Drinking Water Program has absorbed inflation and taken on new federal regulatory mandates—such as PFAS, Lead and Copper, and Consumer Confidence Reporting—without corresponding fee increases. Concurrently, feedback to IRWA from member systems demonstrates a lack of confidence in the benefit of fee increases if they only maintain the current status quo. Systems relying on DEQ for service have expressed concern about decreases in effective service, particularly in the case of acceptable response times for queries, assistance requests, or plan approvals. Delays from DEQ are detrimental to public water systems who require plan approvals and other deliverables to move forward with projects, incurring increased costs. IRWA strongly encourages DEQ to evaluate their capacity to fulfill acceptable levels of service and to consider solutions to deliver service expectations under the Drinking Water Program. Water systems would greatly benefit from additional information about the services that DEQ provides to justify the increase in costs that will follow this rulemaking.

More than 50% of the 2,000 public drinking water systems in Idaho are categorized as Transient, or serving less than 20 connections. These systems generally require more resources and assistance from DEQ despite paying a disproportionately low fee to the Drinking Water Program. IRWA recognizes that Transient systems tend to receive lower revenue due to

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the nature of their user base, and that this reduced revenue translates to more technical, financial, and managerial challenges that require intervention by DEQ. In consideration of the substantially larger category of municipalities who are carrying the burden of the fees' disproportionate cost at the benefit of Transient systems, our Association is inclined to support the proposed flat rate and \$5.50 per connection fee established over a 2- to 4- year period of incremental increase, eliminating the current tiered structure. IRWA considers the proposed flat rate to be more closely aligned with the costs of Drinking Water Program management and to be more equitable for Idaho's public water systems as a whole. IRWA reiterates that an incremental increase over the span of multiple years will be easier for all utilities to address than a substantial upfront increase.

Finally, IRWA strongly supports proposed adjustments to electronic billing and payment methods, as well as the use of late fees for delinquent payments and the use of collection processes for delinquent accounts. It is important that DEQ implement these factors to ensure accountability across the water industry, and to ensure that the proposed fee increases are successful in their mission to keep DEQ solvent and effective in their service to Idaho's drinking water systems.

IRWA thanks DEQ for the opportunity to provide these comments and to participate in the public and stakeholder engagement process. Our Association remains committed to supporting a regulatory framework that protects Idaho's water resources while ensuring practical, efficient compliance pathways for rural and small utilities.

Respectfully,



Robert Dial
Board President
Idaho Rural Water Association



Peter Stayton
Board Legislative Director
Idaho Rural Water Association

Comment 13

From: [Joel Mottishaw](#)
To: [Tyler Fortunati](#)
Subject: RE: Drinking Water Program Fees Proposed Changes
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2026 4:49:06 PM

CAUTION: This email originated outside the State of Idaho network. Verify links and attachments BEFORE you click or open, even if you recognize and/or trust the sender. Contact your agency service desk with any concerns.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the proposed fee increase due to the decreased federal funding Idaho DEQ is expecting to see. I would strongly recommend that state fees are NOT increased and rather, all processes and staffing of Idaho DEQ are re-evaluated and downsized. The reason the disease of progressivism has been allowed to flourish across America is because of hyperbolic funding “emergencies” like the one created here. Progressivism will continue to steal the public’s control of their lands and resources in the name of “saving” it. Instead of attempting to regulate everything into compliance I would strongly recommend public outreach campaigns to inform through grace the negative impacts certain actions, activities, processes, etc can have on individual environmental situations.

Thank you for your consideration and hopefully recognition of individual rights and freedoms of the citizens of Idaho, of which those rights weigh much heavier than any government bureaucracy, regardless of how well funded it may be!

Joel

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Thank You,
Amador Water Agency 12800 Ridge Road, Sutter Creek, California 95685 www.amadorwater.org

Comment 14

From: [Brent Ollerton](#)
To: [Tyler Fortunati](#)
Subject: Drinking Water Program Fees Proposed Changes
Date: Thursday, April 16, 2026 3:44:45 PM

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I am writing to provide comments regarding the proposed revisions to IDAPA 58.01.08 governing fees for public drinking water systems.

Over the past several years, our system has experienced steady increases in annual fees. Prior to 2022, we paid approximately \$984 annually. In 2023 and 2024, this increased to \$1,200 for approximately 300 connections. In 2025, we paid \$1,384 for 346 connections.

Under the current draft proposals, the financial impact to our system would be substantial. Based on our current number of connections, the proposed flat fee structure would increase our annual cost to approximately \$2,003. While this represents a noticeable increase, it is within a range that may be manageable with careful planning.

However, under the proposed tiered fee structure, our annual cost would rise to approximately \$2,768. This represents nearly a doubling of our current fees and would place a significant burden on our system and, ultimately, our customers.

As a small system, our water fund operates within tight financial constraints. Increases of this magnitude would likely require rate adjustments that could negatively impact the affordability of water service for our community. We are committed to maintaining safe and reliable drinking water, but sudden and substantial fee increases make it more difficult to balance regulatory compliance with financial sustainability.

We respectfully request that the Department carefully consider the impact of these proposed changes on small and mid-sized systems like ours. If fee increases are necessary, a more gradual approach or a structure similar to the proposed flat fee would be more manageable and predictable for budgeting purposes.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on this matter. We appreciate the Department's work to protect public health and look forward to continued collaboration in a way that remains financially sustainable for local systems and the communities they serve.

Brent Ollerton
Water Treatment Operator

Comment 15

From: [Branden Rose](#)
To: [Tyler Fortunati](#)
Subject: Late comment
Date: Monday, April 20, 2026 11:55:34 AM

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Tyler,

Kyler Marine was called by Dan McCracken from IDEQ and wanted our District support, and below are HLID's comments.

I want to express my opposition to the proposed rate increase by IDEQ. I believe the increase is excessively high and will negatively impact our CIP funding in the long run. There are alternative funding opportunities DEQ could explore, such as charging for plan reviews, implementing fees for Letters of Intent, or considering small incremental increases over a longer period. This rate increase is intended for programs that assist water systems, but it does not address the underlying issues of poor system maintenance or the need for these systems to increase their rates to avoid relying on bailouts.

We have experienced bailouts within our district for small systems that have received support, and we have the capacity to take over and provide more reliable service at no cost to the customer. However, the small water district received a grant to install generator backup power; these systems still experience depressurization once a month. They are right back to business as normal.

It's important that our patrons are informed before IDEQ raises its rates, as they will ultimately bear the burden of these changes. This approach would help us budget for the future and clearly communicate to our patrons how our funding is being utilized

Thank you,
Branden Rose
Branden Rose
Hayden Lake Irrigation District
District Administrator
208-772-2612 Office
208-518-8175 Cell

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