

Water Quality Fee Increase Rulemaking 2024

EQC Presentation

July 12, 2024

Agenda

- Proposed fee increase and authorities
- Water quality services supported
- Rulemaking timeline
- DEQ recommendation

Authority to increase fees

- **468B.051 Fees for water quality permits and programs.**
 - Increase up to 3% so long as anticipated increase in costs is greater or equal to the proposed fee increase.
 - May increase fees greater than 3% if provided for in DEQ's legislatively approved budget.
 - EQC may increase fees once per year for water quality permitting, underground injection control permitting, 401 dredge and fill certification, wastewater operator certification, and onsite wastewater management program.

Proposed fees

3% increase applies to application and renewal fees, annual fees, and surcharges for:

- Underground Injection Control Program OAR 340-045-0075
- 401 Dredge and Fill Water Quality Certification Program OAR 340-048-0055
- Wastewater Operator Certification Program OAR 340-049-0065
- Water Quality Permitting Program OAR 340-071-0140 and OAR 340-045-0075

17% increase applies to:

Onsite Wastewater Management Program
OAR 340-071-0800

- 3% yearly increase (468B.051) and
- 14% authorized by POP 123 during 2023 Legislative session to fund resource enhancements only for the *residential or direct services* onsite septic system oversight (not WPCF)

Increasing costs

Budget Period	Cost per FTE
2021-2023 Legislatively Adopted Budget	\$354,862
2023-2025 Legislatively Adopted Budget	\$378,921
Percent increase over two-year period	7.06%

- Budgeted cost increase of programs is 3.53% percent per year
- Actual cost increases per year will be larger than the budgeted increase due to salary increases from the 2023 state collective bargaining agreement
 - December 2023 Cost of Living Adjustment 6.5%
 - January 2025 Cost of Living Adjustment 6.55%
- DEQ endeavors to adjust fees incrementally, but larger fee increases may be needed in the future just to maintain current service levels

Water Quality Permitting Program

- Maintains, enhances and protects Oregon's waters from the discharge of pollutants through the permitting, compliance, and enforcement process.
- Includes Stormwater, NPDES (surface water waste dischargers), WPCF (all other waste dischargers), Some Onsite Septic Systems, and General permits.
- Permits municipalities, industries, and federal and state agencies.
- 87 FTE (Full-time equivalent)
- Last fee increase: 3% in 2023



Wastewater Operator Certification Program

- A certified operator is required for all wastewater plants in Oregon treating human sewage to responsibly control their systems.
- About 1400 operators ensure ~400 public and private wastewater systems are managed to protect public health and the environment.
- DEQ's program is 100% fee-funded.
- 2 FTE statewide
- Last fee increase: 60% in 2013



Underground Injection Control Program

- Protects freshwater aquifers from contamination due to UICs.
- Assists municipalities, businesses and residences statewide.
- Last fee increase: 7% in 2019
Prior to 2019, no increase for 12 years
- 2.4 FTE statewide



401 Dredge and Fill Water Quality Certification Program

- Reviews and evaluates the water quality impacts of projects requiring a federal permit or license that may result in a discharge to waters of the U.S.
- Issues certifications to ensure existing water uses will not be degraded.
- Reviews applications from municipalities, state agencies, businesses and residences.
- 4.5 FTE statewide
- Last fee increase: 2013 (fee structure varied)

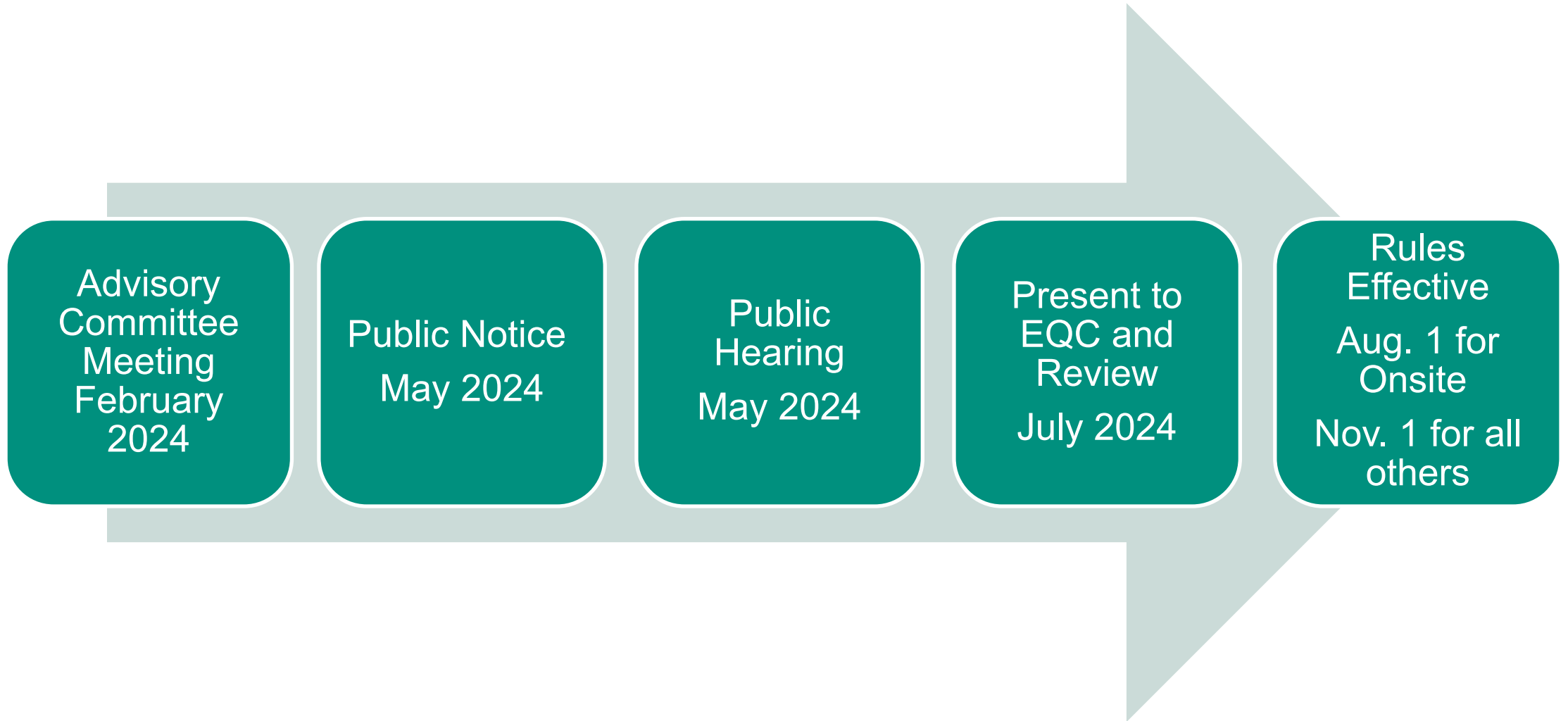


Onsite Wastewater Management Program

- Oversight of statewide septic systems
 - Larger WPCF permitted systems
 - Smaller, primarily residential, systems (direct services)
- Licenses sewage disposal services
- Last fee increase for direct services and licenses: 3% in 2017
- 14 FTE statewide



Rulemaking timeline



Advisory committee membership

Name	Title	Affiliation
Lisette Hamer-Richardson	O&M Installer	Affordable Septic Systems
Mark Landauer	Lobbyist	Special Districts Association of Oregon
Jerry Linder	Executive Director	Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies
Peggy Lynch	Natural Resources Coordinator	League of Women Voters of Oregon
Jenny MacKrell	Senior Permit Technician	Klamath County
Sharla Moffett	Senior Policy Director	Oregon Business and Industry
Thomas Puttman	President and CEO	Puttman Infrastructure, Inc.
Jeremiah Sonne	Water Quality Specialist	Port of Portland
Jackie White	Director of Regulatory and Technical Affairs	Northwest Pulp and Paper Association

Proposed motion language

“I move that the Environmental Quality Commission adopt the proposed rule amendments in Attachment A as part of chapter 340 of the Oregon Administrative Rules.”

Thank you

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