



# Water Quality Fee Increase Rulemaking 2026

Mike Kucinski and Rebecca Bodnar

Jan. 15, 2026

Environmental Quality Commission Meeting

# Purpose and Importance

---

**Annual Adjustment:** EQC may increase water quality fees by up to 3% annually (ORS 468.051(2))

**Recalibration:** Policy option package 120 approved by the 2025 Legislature authorized the EQC to increase fees by more than 3% for:

- Underground Injection Control
- 401 Dredge and Fill Certification
- Onsite Wastewater Management
- Wastewater Operator Certification

**The fee increases maintain current service levels for water quality permitting, licensing, certification and groundwater protection services.**

# Prior EQC Involvement

## EQC oversight: WQ fee increase 10-year history

Program	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>401*</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3%	3%
<b>UIC</b>	-	-	-	7%	-	-	-	-	3%	3%
<b>Onsite</b>	-	3%	-	-	-	-	-	-	17%	3%
<b>Operator Certification**</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3%	3%
<b>NPDES/WPCF/Stormwater</b>	12%	3%	7%	3%	13%	11%	3%	3%	3%	3%

\*Current 401 fee structure was implemented in 2013 with no increases in 2024

\*\*Last recalibration increase for Operator Certification was 2013

# Fee Increases: Water Quality Programs

---

## Water Quality Permitting

- Sustained by 89 full time employees
- The program develops and implements:
  - ~ 300 NPDES Individual permits
  - ~ 200 WPCF Individual permits
  - ~ 1000 General permit registrants
  - ~ 2000 Stormwater permits
- Has increased fees annually by 3% for the last several years

**Maintains, enhances and protects Oregon's waters by regulating pollutant discharge through the permitting process**

Proposed increase:  
3%

# Fee Increases: Water Quality Programs

---

## Underground Injection Control (UIC)

- Sustained by 2.4 full time employees
- Oversight of 40,000+ registered UICs, hundreds added each year
- Addresses and resolves concerns raised by the public
- Assists consultants with rules and policies
- Supports municipalities, businesses and residents statewide

**Protects drinking water aquifers from contamination**

Proposed increase:  
 $3\% + 15\% = 18\%$

# Fee Increases: Water Quality Programs

---

## 401 Water Quality Certification

- Sustained by 4.0 full time employees
- Issues certifications to federal and state agencies, municipalities, businesses and residences
- Reviews ~200 application requests per year
- Inspects certified project sites and responds to complaints

**Issues state water quality certifications for projects requiring a federal license or permit to work in surface waters of the U.S.**

Proposed increase:  
 $3\% + 20\% = 23\%$

# Fee Increases: Water Quality Programs

---

## Onsite Wastewater Management

- Sustained by 12 full time employees
- Processes 850+ applications each year
- Program implementation in three counties
- Oversight and technical assistance across 33 counties
- Licenses sewage disposal services, manages septic permitting, provides product approvals and training

**Siting, installation and operation of residential and small commercial septic systems**

Proposed increase:  
 $3\% + 30\% = 33\%$

# Fee Increases: Water Quality Programs

## Wastewater Operator Certification

- Sustained by 2.3 full time employees
- Oversight ~400 public and private wastewater systems and ~1400 certified operators
- Coordinates with Oregon Health Authority
- Supports education, application and renewal processing, evaluating course curricula for CEUs

*The proposed rulemaking also includes a minor clarification related to exam scoring.*

**Ensures wastewater operators safely operate domestic sewage wastewater systems**

Proposed increase:  
 $3\% + 14\% = 17\%$  2026  
12% 2027

# Fee Increases: Water Quality Programs

## Proposed Fee Increases and Effective Dates

Program	Standard annual increase (up to)	POP 120 fee recalibration	Total increase (up to)	Effective date
NPDES / WPCF	3%	—	3%	Nov 2026
Onsite	3%	30%	33%	July 2026
401 Dredge and Fill	3%	20%	23%	July 2026
Wastewater Operator Certification	3%	14%	17%	July 2026
	—	12%	12%	July 2027
UIC	3%	15%	18%	July 2026

# Key Issues: Rules Advisory Committee

Name	Organization	Background, Title or Role	Interest Represented
<b>Jason Green</b>	OAWU	Executive Director	Water Utilities and Wastewater Treatment and Collection
<b>Lisette Hamer-Richardson</b>	Affordable Septic	O&M Installer	Business Owner – Residential Onsite
<b>Mark Landauer</b>	Special District Association of Oregon	Executive Director	Utilities – Stormwater, NPDES, WPCF, General Permits
<b>Geoff Rabinowitz</b>	Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies	Executive Director	Publicly Owned Treatment Works
<b>Peggy Lynch</b>	League of Women Voters	Natural Resource Coordinator	Conservation Organization – General interest
<b>Jenny MacKrell</b>	Klamath County	Senior Permit Technician	Local Government
<b>Jared Kistner</b>	Port of Portland	Water Quality Specialist	Water Quality Permitting Perspective
<b>Jackie White</b>	Northwest Pulp and Paper Association	Director of Regulatory and Technical Affairs	Regulated Industry

# Key Issues: Small Municipality Example

Example:	Current fees	Proposed increase	Proposed fees	Increase
NPDES individual permit – Annual Compliance fee 1MGD, Type C2a	\$10,696	3%	\$11,017	\$321
Operator Certification – Program Support fee ADWF 1.0 – 1.999 MGD	\$381	3% + 17%	\$457	\$76
Operator Certification – Renewal fee Grade II certificates, per person	\$168	3% + 17%	\$201	\$33
1200-U UIC General Permit – Annual fee City with 14 medium risk, and 4 high risk UICs	\$1,492	3%	\$1,534	\$42
401 WQC Wetland impact fee	\$1,044	3% + 20%	\$1,284	\$240
Stormwater	\$1,558	3%	\$1,604	\$46
<b>Total increase</b>	<b>\$15,339</b>		<b>\$16,097</b>	<b>\$758</b>

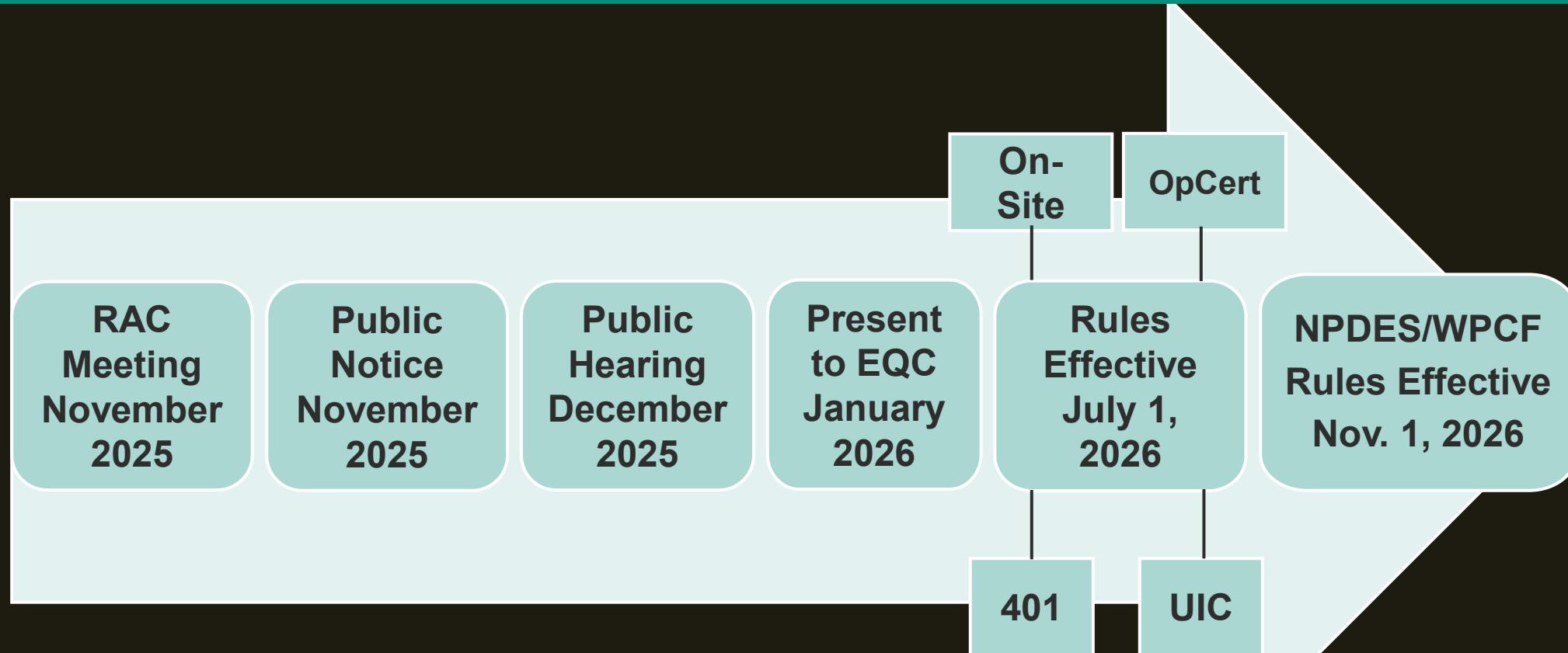
# Key Issues: Onsite Septic System Example

New residential onsite septic system in a direct service county*	Current DEQ fees	Proposed fee	Increase
Site Evaluation application + administrative surcharge	\$963	\$1,280	\$317
Type D Permit application + administrative surcharge	\$1,652	\$2,196	\$544
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2,615</b>	<b>\$3,476</b>	<b>\$861</b>

The other 33 counties are managed by local governments.

\* The direct service counties are Curry, Jackson, and Josephine counties.

# Rulemaking Timeline



# Closing: Key Takeaways

---

Water Quality annual fee increase and POP120 recalibration:

- Maintains current service levels across water quality programs
- Annual increase uses statutory authority for modest, predictable future increases
- Recalibration addresses long-standing fee gaps
- Supports timely permitting, certification and groundwater protection

# Thank You

---

## **Mike Kucinski**

Deputy Administrator – Water Quality  
503-804-5692

[michael.kucinski@deq.oregon.gov](mailto:michael.kucinski@deq.oregon.gov)

## **Rebecca Bodnar**

Water Quality Permit and Program  
Development Manager  
971-269-5363

[rebecca.bodnar@deq.oregon.gov](mailto:rebecca.bodnar@deq.oregon.gov)

## **Jason Simpson**

Policy Analyst  
503-995-4054

[jason.simpson@deq.oregon.gov](mailto:jason.simpson@deq.oregon.gov)



# Title VI and Alternative Formats

---

DEQ does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age, sex, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or marital status in the administration of its programs and activities.

Visit DEQ's [Civil Rights and Environmental Justice page](#).

[Español](#) | [한국어](#) | [繁體中文](#) | [Русский](#) | [Tiếng Việt](#) | [العربية](#)

Contact: 800-452-4011 | TTY: 711 | [deqinfo@deq.state.or.us](mailto:deqinfo@deq.state.or.us)