



Water Quality Fee Increase Rulemaking 2026

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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
401*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3%	3%
UIC	-	-	-	7%	-	-	-	-	3%	3%
Onsite	-	3%	-	-	-	-	-	-	17%	3%
Operator Certification**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3%	3%
NPDES/WPCF/ Stormwater	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 residencies
- 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
Jason Green	OAWU	Executive Director	Water Utilities and Wastewater Treatment and Collection
Lisette Hamer-Richardson	Affordable Septic	O&M Installer	Business Owner – Residential Onsite
Mark Landauer	Special District Association of Oregon	Executive Director	Utilities – Stormwater, NPDES, WPCF, General Permits
Geoff Rabinowitz	Oregon Association of Clean Water Agencies	Executive Director	Publicly Owned Treatment Works
Peggy Lynch	League of Women Voters	Natural Resource Coordinator	Conservation Organization – General interest
Jenny MacKrell	Klamath County	Senior Permit Technician	Local Government
Jared Kistner	Port of Portland	Water Quality Specialist	Water Quality Permitting Perspective
Jackie White	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
Total increase	\$15,339		\$16,097	\$758

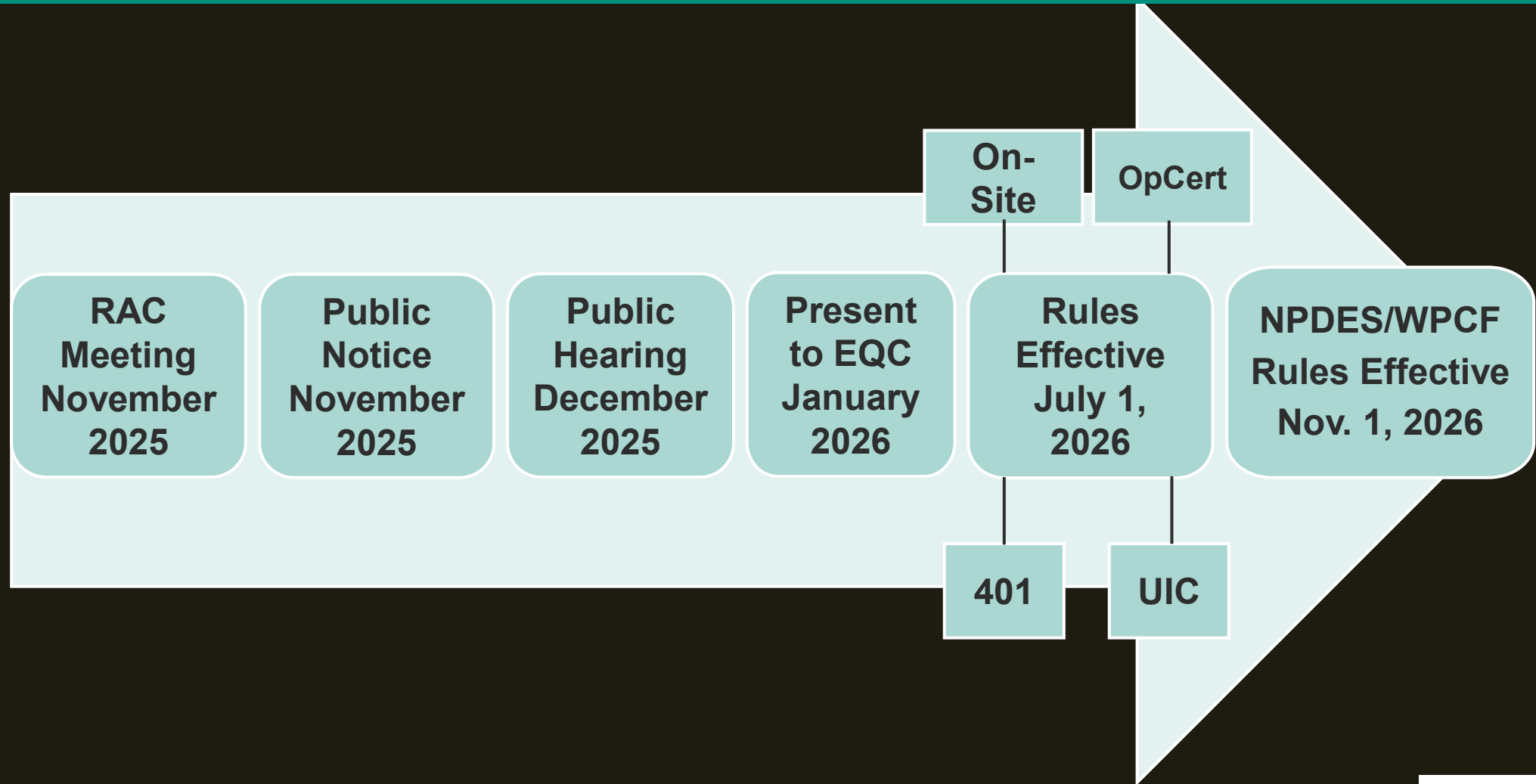
Key Issues: Onsite Septic System Example

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
Total	\$2,615	\$3,476	\$861

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

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