

## Environmental Laboratory Accreditation rule revision (WAC 173-50)

### The problem

The current fee structure for lab accreditation does not provide sufficient revenue to cover the cost of the Department of Ecology's (Ecology) Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program. As a result, the state general fund has been subsidizing the program.

Through its 2009 operating budget, the Legislature authorized Ecology to raise fees to cover the full cost of the program.

### The solution

To begin easing the funding shortfall, Ecology has eliminated one of seven positions in the accreditation program. It must now increase lab accreditation fees by about 45 percent to fully fund the remaining program. Ecology strives to maintain a revenue-neutral program. Lab accreditation fee increases will help the state break even.

With the loss of one position, Ecology will also need to change some business practices in the rule that will reduce its oversight of accredited laboratories. Ecology will explore various business alternatives through this rule-making process, and also adjust fees to reflect the level of effort required to accredit different types of labs.

### You are invited to learn more

Ecology will invite all interested parties to participate in workshops during November 2009 to discuss proposed changes to WAC 173-50. We will hold public hearings on those proposed changes during April 2010.

You can visit our web site to get more information about this rule making:

[www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/labs/lab-accreditation.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/labs/lab-accreditation.html)



### Why it matters

Ecology runs an accreditation program for about 460 environmental laboratories, including labs that analyze drinking water.

Accreditation of environmental laboratories ensures that labs are capable of providing accurate and defensible analytical data to Ecology, the state Department of Health, and other data users. This helps protect public health and the environment.

Washington State drinking water permits and environmental permits require the use of accredited labs.

### Contact

Stew Lombard

360-895-6148

[Stew.Lombard@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Stew.Lombard@ecy.wa.gov)