

Focus on: Private/Public Domestic Wastewater Flow Fee

What is a reclaimed water facility?

Reclaimed water starts out as domestic wastewater. After all the wastewater from residences and businesses is collected and treated at a wastewater treatment plant, some is separated, further treated and cleaned, and tested at a facility specifically designed to treat reclaimed water to ensure it's safe for other uses. The departments of Health and Ecology work together to permit reclaimed water projects and protect public health and the environment.

Rulemaking process

Ecology updates the Water Quality Permit Fees with a rulemaking every two years. Ecology is accepting public comment on the proposed changes from March 27, 2025, 12 a.m. to May 20, 2025, 11:59 p.m.

See the "Provide feedback" section to find out how you can stay involved in this rulemaking. After reviewing all feedback received, Ecology will consider whether any changes need to be made before adopting an updated fee schedule.

Reclaimed water facility permit fees

The reclaimed water facilities are a varied and complex group of permitted sites. Ecology recently audited a group of wastewater permits for reclaimed water facilities and discovered the facilities were not all in the same fee category, even though the facilities conduct similar operations. This makes it difficult to compare the costs of managing the permits for these facilities against each other and ensure we are setting fair fees for these permits.

To correct this, we looked at different ways to assess fees for reclaimed water facilities. We are proposing to move these facilities into an existing fee category for wastewater facilities called **Privately owned or Public-owned Domestic Wastewater Facilities**. This is a tiered fee based on a facility's maximum daily flow or their maximum monthly average flow in millions of gallons per day. Facilities are charged according to whichever number is higher in their waste discharge permit. This fee category is used for facilities that do not primarily serve residential customers (such as schools or resorts) and for state-owned domestic wastewater facilities (such as park facilities).

Some, but not all, of the reclaimed water facilities could technically be on the residential equivalent fee. Some are on the residential equivalent fee now. We are proposing to change this because we do not believe this is the best fee approach for these facilities going forward, for the following reasons:

- Having all these facilities in one fee category allows us to best estimate expenditures and needed revenue, which results in more fair and accurate fees. Right now, these facilities are spread across different fee categories and not paying fair rates in relation to one another, given their amount of discharge flow.
- For facilities serving large populations, the residential equivalent fee may be very high, and they may already be paying a municipal wastewater facility fee based on the same residential equivalent data (if both facilities serve the same population).

Because the reclaimed water facilities generally discharge higher flows than the existing permittees in this fee category, we are proposing to expand the flow tiers to accommodate these larger discharges. A breakdown of the proposed fee changes is included in the table below.

Proposed Fee Changes

Existing tiers with proposed changes	FY25 Fee (Current)	FY26 Proposed Fee	FY27 Proposed Fee
NEW – 15 MGD and greater	n/a	\$40,000	\$41,000
NEW – 10 MGD to < 15 MGD	n/a	\$30,000	\$30,800
NEW – 5 MGD to < 10 MGD	n/a	\$25,000	\$25,600
NEW – 1 MGD to < 5 MGD	n/a	\$20,000	\$20,500
ADJ - .1 MGD to < 1 MGD	\$10,000	\$10,620	\$11,150
.05 MGD to < .1 MGD	\$6,000	\$6,370	\$6,700
.01 MGD to < .05 MGD	\$3,000	\$3,180	\$3,340
.005 MGD to < .01 MGD	\$1,500	\$1,600	\$1,680
.001 MGD to < .005 MGD	\$750	\$800	\$840
Less than .001 MGD	\$375	\$400	\$420

Questions

If you have any questions about how the proposed fee schedule would impact your permit fee, please reach out to the Fee Unit at wqfeunit@ecy.wa.gov or 1-800-633-6193, Option 2.

Provide feedback

Ecology is accepting comments from March 27, 2025, 12:00 a.m. to May 20, 2025, 11:59 p.m. We are also holding two virtual public hearings, which will include a presentation and question and answer session, followed by an opportunity to provide verbal comments.

- May 12, 5:30 p.m., [register on Zoom](#)
- May 13, 1:00 p.m., [register on Zoom](#)

Visit our webpage for this rulemaking at ecology.wa.gov/WQ-fee-rule to learn more about the proposed changes and how you can provide feedback to Ecology.

If you would like to receive announcements about this rulemaking, sign up for our [Water Quality Permit Fees email list](#)¹.



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To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6600 or email at wqfeunit@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY call 711 or 877-833-6341.

¹ https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/WAECY/subscriber/new?topic_id=WAECY_152