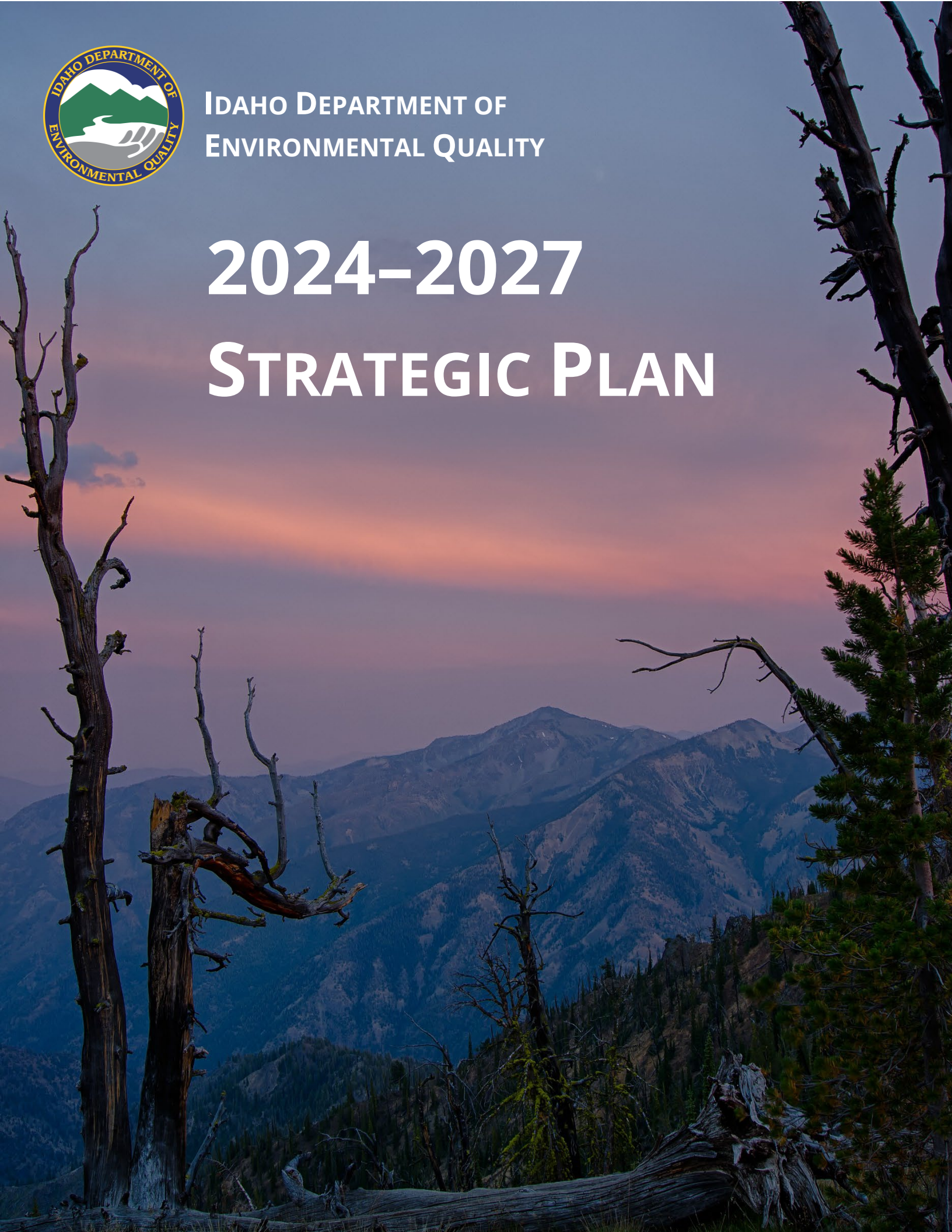


IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

2024–2027 STRATEGIC PLAN

Vision for the Future

Director's Message

I am pleased to present the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ's) strategic plan for fiscal years 2024–2027. This plan details our core functions and services, our significant accomplishments this year, and our focus for the next four years. It also outlines how we intend to use our financial resources to ensure that the services we provide meet the needs of the state and the citizens we serve.

Mission

To protect human health and the quality of Idaho's air, land, and water.

Vision

An Idaho where the quality of our environment enhances healthy living and supports thriving communities

Core Services

Our core services underpin every element of our strategic plan and drive how we respond to fiscal, regulatory, and environmental realities. These services span our air, water, and waste management programs and our compliance assistance and outreach efforts:

- Manage air quality to ensure compliance with federal health-based standards.
- Protect soil and water from hazardous, solid, and mining wastes and petroleum contamination.
- Manage, mitigate, and remediate contaminated areas.
- Protect public health and the environment at and around the Idaho National Laboratory.
- Maintain and improve surface and ground water quality.
- Ensure delivery of safe and reliable drinking water from public water systems.
- Prevent, prepare for, and respond to public health emergencies.
- Encourage and empower Idaho citizens, businesses, and communities to be environmentally responsible.

Accomplishments

The first goal in our strategic plan is to "make recognizable and measurable environmental improvements" and this year we advanced that effort in many important ways. Thanks to an unprecedented influx of federal and state money, we made significant progress prioritizing $370 million

in infrastructure and environmental cleanup funds to communities across Idaho. This money will support water and sewer projects, landfills, contaminated site cleanup, and nutrient reduction projects in Coeur d'Alene Lake and will have a significant and lasting impact on the lives of many Idahoans.

Our second strategic goal is to "provide first class customer service as a trusted source in environmental leadership." This work draws on many of our core services and there are many success stories from this year that I could highlight. Some examples include aiding in the cleanup of targeted transuranic radioactive waste at the Idaho National Laboratory, supporting community safety during last year's extraordinary fire season, updating the human health criteria for arsenic, and expanding per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) sampling statewide.

Jess Byrne, Director

Our third goal is to "foster a culture of continuous improvement," and employee engagement continues to be central to that effort. This year, we advanced engagement efforts in a variety of ways, including staff recognition, an agency "snapshot" highlighting major performance milestones, and engaging onboarding materials for new staff.

We also thought about engagement in a new light by developing a set of shared agency values that underpin our work. The four values—integrity, service, teamwork, and results—have always been at the center of what we do, so our goal was to make them more visible throughout the agency. These values serve as reference points that can continue to guide how we do our work, including carrying out our mission fairly and transparently, delivering the best customer service for the public and each other, working collaboratively, and making a positive impact. We are working hard to ensure that everyone at DEQ feels included in and represented by these values, and I am grateful for the many employees who reinforce these principles in their interactions with each other, our partners, and stakeholder groups.

This year stands out in many ways and I am extremely grateful for the employees who made these accomplishments possible. Together, our agency made important strides in advancing our strategic plan goals, resulting in substantive and meaningful environmental outcomes for the communities we serve.

Looking Forward

We will remain focused on managing the state and federal dollars that have been appropriated to us by the legislature and federal government. Our strategic plan will remain our central roadmap as we work to carry out these significant priority items along with our core services. Our goals, objectives, and performance measures will continue to guide our work over the next four years as we advance our core services, implement major priority items, and continue to protect public health and the quality of Idaho's air, land, and water.

Your DEQ

Protecting Human Health and the Environment

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), established by the Idaho Environmental Protection and Health Act (Idaho Code § 39-101 et seq.), protects human health and the environment.

DEQ implements and enforces delegated federal programs under the Clean Air, Clean Water, Safe Drinking Water, and Resource Conservation and Recovery Acts, and state environmental laws and rules. This regulatory responsibility covers activities that ensure Idaho's air, land, water, and citizens are protected from the adverse impacts of pollution.

- Environmental monitoring assesses conditions and ensures health-based standards are met.
- Permits are issued to facilities that manage wastes or release pollutants to limit the amounts to safe levels.
- Inspections of pollution sources and responses to complaints ensure compliance with environmental regulations and standards.
- Remediation removes or neutralizes contaminants in soil, ground water, and surface waters. Compliance is voluntary or enforcement action may be taken.
- Oversight includes cleanup, pollution reduction, and drinking water and wastewater infrastructure improvements.
- Outreach and education facilitate compliance with environmental requirements.

"Most people choose to live in Idaho because of the quality of life it offers. DEQ's role in protecting public health and the quality of Idaho's air, land, and water plays a very important role in that."

Jess Byrne, Director

AGENCY PERFORMANCE—ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMMITMENT

Our strategic plan establishes performance commitments and assesses progress toward achieving agency goals as required by Idaho Code § 67-1903.

- Our goals describe the broad environmental human health conditions the agency tries to achieve and how we want to serve Idaho's citizens.
- Our objectives are the incremental steps taken to achieve each goal.
- Our performance measures tell us how we know we are making progress.

This plan provides Idaho's legislature with planning and performance commitments and accounts for the statutory authority granted to the agency and its appropriated annual budget.

Using specific goals, objectives, and performance measures, we successfully completed several objectives this year. The air quality program hosted a permit application workshop to address common permit incompleteness issues. We developed an agency-wide key performance indicator inventory and standard operating procedure to streamline our data and performance measure tracking. The hazardous waste program addressed a barrier to compliance by providing container labels to generators. In the coming year, DEQ will continue to make action-based progress with updated objectives and performance measures.

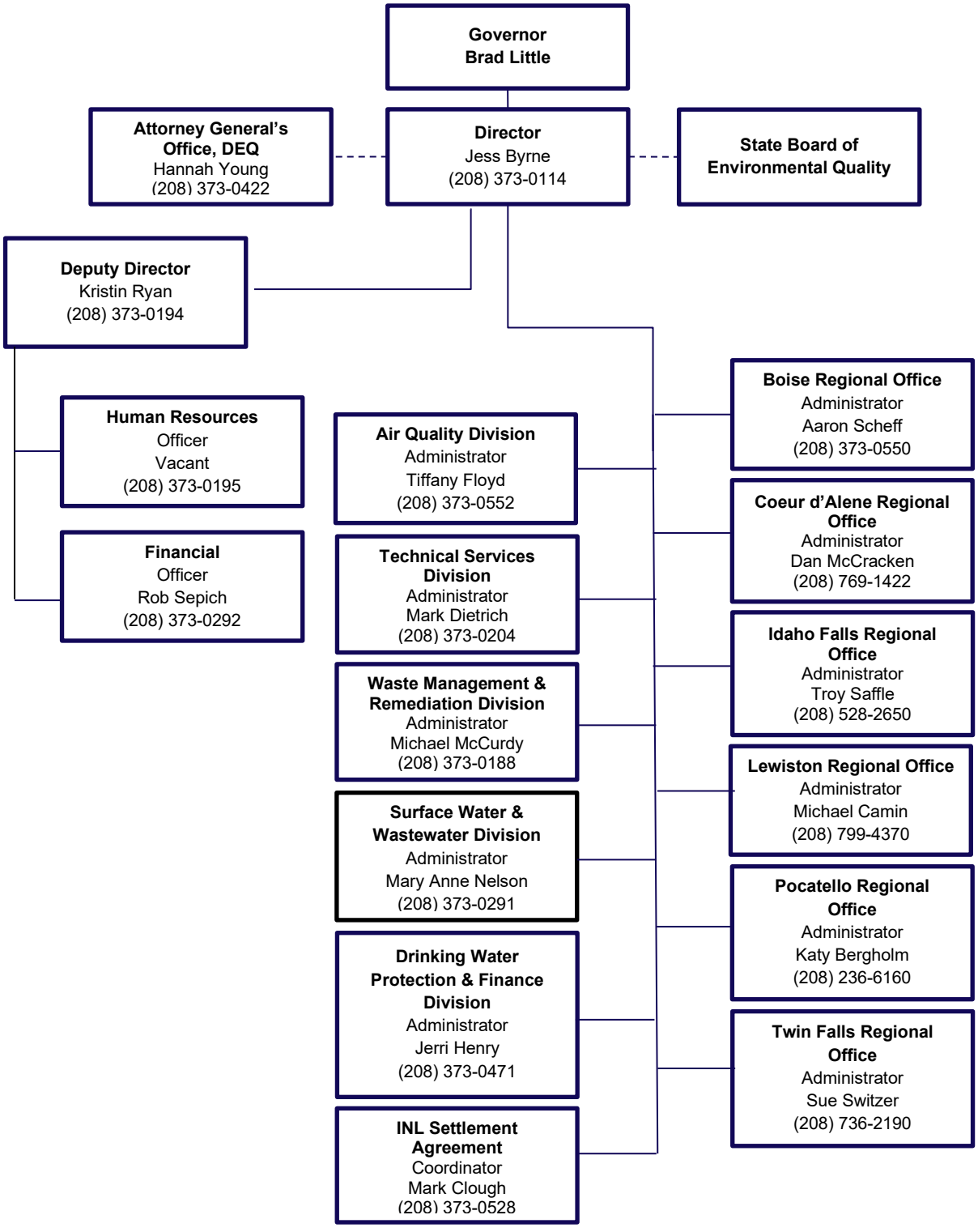
DEQ's fiscal year 2024 performance commitments

Benchmark Performance Measure	FY 2024 Target*
Reduce number of unhealthy days based on the Air Quality Index throughout the state.	0 days
Increase the percentage of assessed rivers and streams supporting beneficial uses.	38%
Reduce the number of known contaminated sites.	235 sites (10% reduction from 261 current sites)
Increase the percentage of complete permit applications on initial submittal.	82%
Increase the compliance rate of inspected facilities.	82%
Increase the percentage of permits issued before deadline.	81%
Conduct 50 lean improvement projects per year.	100%
Reduce the rate of elective, nonretirement turnover.	11.7%

*See section Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures for further explanation of each performance measure target benchmark.

AGENCY SUPPORT—STATEWIDE

DEQ is headquartered in Boise and has five divisions and six regional offices focused on developing and administering programs and policies.



Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures

Goal 1—Make Recognizable and Measurable Environmental Improvements

Objectives—Air quality

1.1 By June 2027, implement a statewide targeted outreach campaign to reduce Particular Matter (PM) 2.5 emissions from woodstoves.

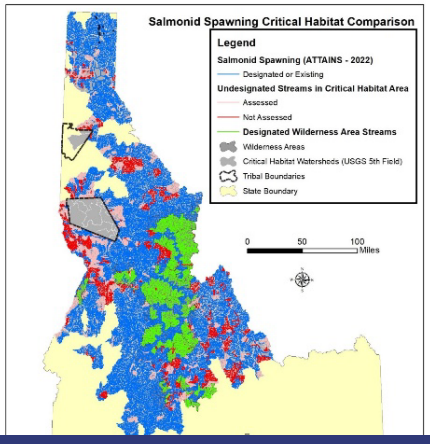
1.2 By July 2025, implement statewide prescribed fire smoke management plan.

Performance Measure

Reduce number of unhealthy days based on the Air Quality Index throughout the state.

Benchmark—0 days

This performance measure is determined by any single air monitor reaching unhealthy (red) air quality levels statewide at any time during the year. If multiple air monitors reach unhealthy air quality levels on the same day, it is still counted as 1 day.



In an effort to identify salmonid spawning critical habitat where assessments are needed, the surface water team worked with technical services to geospatially target areas for assessments. They created a map showing undesignated streams in critical habitat areas that have yet to be assessed. This effort has the potential to increase the baseline of assessed stream miles supporting beneficial uses.

Objectives—Water quality

1.3 Develop a strategy for long term trend monitoring for Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) implementation plans and 5-year reviews including stable funding sources, definition of trend analysis, purpose and goal of trend monitoring.

1.4 By 2025, develop and implement a water quality improvement program to reduce point and nonpoint source loads on a watershed basis.

1.5 By 2026, make data and information available to the public and management agencies in order to facilitate decisions to improve water quality.

Performance Measure

Increase the percentage of assessed rivers and streams supporting beneficial uses.

Benchmark—38% (Increased from 35% in FY2022)

Derived from DEQ's 2020–2022 Integrated Report, this performance measure includes river miles from assessed rivers and streams that support beneficial uses.

Objectives—Waste management and remediation

1.6 By June 2024, increase site owners' and operators' use or understanding of DEQ's assessment, cleanup, and remediation programs.

Performance Measure

Reduce the number of known contaminated sites.

Benchmark—235 sites

Based on 10% reduction of 261 known, open contaminated sites as of June 30, 2022. This performance measure includes leaking underground storage tanks (LUSTs) and general remediation sites. Contaminated site closure is complete when contaminant concentrations meet acceptable risk-based or other approved criteria through assessment or remediation activities. From July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022 there were 144 total new and 110 closed contaminated sites (LUST 18 closures/10 new; general remediation 92 closures /134 new).

This performance measure excludes sites under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (Superfund), including mega sites, such as the Idaho National Laboratory and Bunker Hill; Department of Defense cleanup sites; hazardous waste sites; and solid waste facilities.

In July 2022, the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) hosted a free soil screening event—soilSHOP—near Gilmore, Idaho. Numerous property owners participated by bringing small bags of soil from their properties, which were screened for lead and arsenic. Real-time results were provided to landowners, and toxicologists were on site to explain results and discuss ways to reduce exposure to harmful metals.

Goal 2—Provide First-Class Customer Service as a Trusted Source for Environmental Leadership

Objectives—Permit applications complete

2.1 By March 2025, provide assistance to facilities and/or consultants on how to submit a complete air quality permit to construct application.

2.2 By December 2031, modernize the permit application processes.

Performance Measure

Increase the percentage of complete permit applications on initial submittal.

Benchmark—82%

This performance measure is based on wastewater reuse applications, Idaho Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (IPDES) applications, air quality permit applications, and hazardous waste permit applications.

In October 2022, DEQ's air quality program held an air permit application workshop to identify and address common incompleteness issues.

Objectives—Compliance of inspected facilities

2.3 Establish relationships with regulated facilities to encourage compliance.
2.4 By June 2024, develop a plan to address and remove barriers to compliance.
2.5 By December 2024, leverage data-driven resources to improve compliance and inspection strategies.

Performance Measure

Increase the compliance rate of inspected facilities.

Benchmark—82%

This performance measure is based on 5-year averages across programs. Each program measures compliance differently. Annual updates will be made to the benchmark.

The hazardous waste program identified absent or improper labeling as a frequent violation at regulated facilities. The program now provides labels during inspections to help remove this common compliance barrier.

Goal 3—Foster a Culture of Continuous Improvement

Objectives—Permits issued before deadline

3.1 Reduce barriers to issuing IPDES individual permits in a timely manner.
3.2 By June 2024, increase the efficiency of processing and approving IPDES general permit coverages.
3.3 By December 2026, increase available resources for reuse permit writers.
3.4 By 2026, continue to improve the timely issuance of Air Permits to Construct (PTCs).

Performance Measure

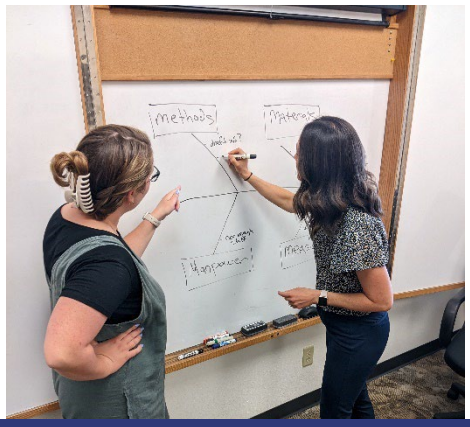
Increase the percentage of permits issued before deadline.

Benchmark—81%

This performance measure includes air quality permits to construct, water quality reuse permits, IPDES permits, and hazardous waste permits. The IPDES Program inherited a permit backlog that will require 1-to-2 permit cycles (5–10 years) to meet the national goal of 90% current permits.

Objectives—Lean improvement projects

3.5 On a continuous basis, evaluate key performance indicators agencywide.
3.6 By June 2024, increase staff capacity to carry out continuous improvement.
3.7 By June 2024, develop a visual dashboard that tracks major agency performance measures.



In May 2023, six DEQ staff completed Lean Champion training, where they applied problem solving tools and techniques to unique challenges they face in their work. These individuals will help promote continuous improvement throughout the agency over the next year.

Performance Measure

Conduct 50 Lean improvement projects per year.

Benchmark—100%

Continuous improvement is a long-term approach to systematically target and incrementally change processes to improve efficiency and quality within the agency. All staff are encouraged to suggest and implement changes that create continuous improvement across the agency.

Objectives—Employee engagement

3.8 By April 2024, develop a forum to foster employee engagement.
3.9 By June 2024, increase manager and supervisor support capacity.
3.10 On an annual basis, implement a participation process that increases staff awareness, engagement, and leadership in developing and implementing the DEQ strategic plan.

Performance Measure

Reduce the rate of elective, nonretirement turnover in the agency.

Benchmark—11.7%

This benchmark is based on a 10% reduction in the FY22 elective, nonretirement turnover rate. This effort will measure employee engagement and retention over time. As an organization, DEQ wants to ensure employees feel connected to the agency, our mission, and the strategic plan. If employees are engaged, they are happier and more productive, which results in less turnover, an expensive issue for DEQ. Assessing engagement and turnover will help us determine if we are achieving this measure.

Emerging Issues and Opportunities

On a 4-year horizon, issues may arise that are short-term or may lead to a shift in the agency's focus and priorities. By anticipating future challenges, DEQ will be better positioned to adjust if needed, while continuing to support our core functions and services. Emerging issues and opportunities are identified below.

Smoke from wildfires and prescribed fires

Smoke from wildfires and prescribed fire use will continue to present a challenge for protecting air quality, safeguarding human health, and ensuring the ongoing vitality of Idaho communities through 2027 and beyond.

Changes in climate and the buildup of dead and dying material in our forests are combining to increase the amount of wildfire smoke Idahoans experience each year. Estimates from federal land management agencies with lands in Idaho suggest Idaho could see triple in the number of acres treated annually with prescribed fire for forest health and wildfire protection over the next decade. Timber harvest rates are also expected to rise in Idaho over the coming years resulting in an increase of woody debris, or slash, that will be burned annually. The combination of increased wildfire smoke and prescribed fire smoke will add to the pressures that state, federal, and local programs face to manage smoke and proactively communicate with affected groups and communities.

Smoke, whether from wildfire or prescribed fire, is a public health concern. Community-based engagement efforts will be essential for DEQ to support individuals and communities who wish to implement Smoke-Ready concepts to protect their health. DEQ anticipates working directly with the public to help limit exposure to smoke using proactive measures. We will also continue to work directly with prescribed fire practitioners to limit smoke impacts when fire is used for forest and slash management.

National Ambient Air Quality Standards update

In 2022, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began its review of the national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) along with the health studies supporting them as required by the Clean Air Act.

DEQ established a new air quality monitoring station in Nampa in 2023 to measure PM 2.5 and PM 10.

EPA collaborates with a committee identified as the Clean Air Scientific Advisory Committee to review the science on health impacts and determine if the current NAAQS is sufficient to provide adequate health and environmental protection.

Two pollutants of most concern to Idaho are particulate matter (PM2.5) and ozone, both of which are part of this federal review process. EPA issued a proposal on the PM2.5 standard earlier this year for public review and comment with an expected final decision soon. Ozone is on a later track with a proposal of the standard expected this spring for public review and comment with a final decision by the end of 2023.

In advance of the potentially changing standards, DEQ continues to collaborate with Idaho communities to ensure areas remain in compliance with the ambient air quality standards.

For example, DEQ has been working with the communities of Salmon and St. Maries for the past few years, where air quality has improved. Air quality improvement has stemmed from changing out old uncertified woodstoves, a source of PM2.5 pollution. As funding becomes available, DEQ sponsors woodstove changeout programs that provide rebates for homeowners to replace older, more polluting stoves with cleaner-burning EPA-certified woodstoves, inserts, pellet stoves, or natural gas or propane units.

Low-cost air quality sensors

Low-cost air quality monitoring sensors, ranging from hundreds to several thousand dollars, are hitting the market for public consumption. Many people are taking this opportunity nationwide to use these sensors to assess air quality in their specific locations. In doing so, they are asking why government agencies have not established broader scale monitoring networks to include these sensors. Reasons are many, but accuracy and dependability are the primary considerations. The high-quality government monitors that comprise the statewide networks are upwards of $20,000 dollars per monitor. These monitors come at a high cost because they are dependable and accurate.

The low-cost sensors are not nearly as accurate and must undergo rigorous testing by agencies alongside their own monitors to ensure greater accuracy as well as many unknowns about life expectancy and dependability. These unknowns can lend some doubt into fully relying on the instrument readings, especially over an extended period.

As more people purchase these sensors, government agencies like DEQ will receive questions. DEQ will communicate to the public the expectations of low-cost sensors versus regulatory agency monitors and continue to find opportunities to use these sensors to supplement applicable monitoring objectives and research.

Inflation Reduction Act Grant Opportunities

In March 2023, EPA announced the Inflation Reduction Act and grant opportunities in the form of a planning grant to eligible entities including states for a non-competitive $3 million. This became a unique opportunity for Idaho to leverage federal dollars and develop together a plan that can improve quality of life for all Idahoans.

By participating in the planning grant, it will also offer another opportunity to compete for additional implementation funding from approximately a $4.6 billion fund to be used by any entity noted in the planning grant. This could provide opportunities for sectors of Idaho's economy to receive support for current projects and new efforts related to air quality and pollution reduction. Idaho agriculture, working lands (forest and range), energy and electricity generation, transportation all would be eligible.

The planning year, June 2023-March 2024, is focused on bringing together Idahoans to identify what is currently being done, what is needed, and where additional funding could help. There is a significant focus on including all communities, in particular rural communities.

The overall grant goal is to support existing and new communities, government, industry, and projects and engage stakeholders to improve air quality and reduce emissions. The grant also helps to support job creation, lower energy costs for families, and deliver cleaner air by reducing air pollution in places where people live, work, play, and go to school.

Get the Lead Out

EPA finalized the lead-copper rule revisions (LCRR) with a compliance date of October 16, 2024. The final rule is intended to better protect children and communities through improving sampling procedures, establishing a trigger level of 10 micrograms per liter to jumpstart mitigation efforts, requiring full lead

service line replacements when systems exceed the action levels, requiring sampling in elementary and childcare facilities, and requiring lead service line inventories. Public water systems will be required to develop lead service line inventories by October 16, 2024. A lead service line is any portion of the pipe that is lead that connects the water main to the building's inlet, regardless of ownership. Specific lead service line funding is provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. DEQ is working to deliver that funding and technical assistance to communities. EPA also intends to make improvements to the LCRR through the Lead Copper Rule Improvements Rule before October 16, 2024.

Investments in Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

The Idaho Legislature appropriated an additional $115 million in infrastructure funding to DEQ for Governor Little's Leading Idaho initiative. This funding is in addition to the $300 million received from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) in fiscal year 2023 and funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The BIL includes specific funding for emerging contaminants and lead service line replacements. A significant portion of all the funding is directed towards smaller communities with the greatest need and least ability to pay for upgrades.

The need for investments in Idaho's water and wastewater infrastructure is evident from the requests DEQ has received for funding. In the past year, DEQ received an unprecedented $1.4 billion in funding requests, and this year, an additional $1.4 billion in total requests, with almost $1.2 billion requested for Leading Idaho funds. DEQ is currently in the process of obligating the funding from the fiscal year 2023 Intended Use Plans (IUPs) and priority lists approved by the Board of Environmental Quality while simultaneously working on the fiscal year 2024 IUPs and priority lists.

Cybersecurity Evaluations through Sanitary Surveys

In March 2023, EPA issued a memorandum requiring states to evaluate cybersecurity at public water systems during sanitary surveys. DEQ is currently evaluating how this requirement will be met. DEQ will assess the state's authority, develop an inventory of public water systems using industrial control systems, and provide education, outreach, and technical assistance to public water systems. Evaluations are anticipated to begin in 2024.

Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling Grant

EPA's Solid Waste Infrastructure for Recycling (SWIFR) cooperative agreement grants for states and territories will fund activities that support long-term planning and data collection needs to demonstrate progress toward the National Recycling Goal and Food Loss and Waste Reduction Goal and advance a Circular Economy for materials. They will also support the state-led implementation of plans to advance post-consumer materials management. The cooperative agreement is intended to enhance the State of Idaho's efforts to meet the SWIFR grants elements. DEQ will work to achieve EPA's goal to develop and implement comprehensive data collection efforts, and develop plan to advance post-consumer materials management. DEQ is expecting to receive approximately $733,000 in federal funding to develop a statewide recycling plan.

Chronic Wasting Disease.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Idaho Department of Fish & Game, DEQ will conduct assessment, modeling, and develop best practices for alternative Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) landfill disposal. This effort will help improve the management of wild-cervid CWD affected areas by developing alternative solid waste disposal options which are critical to mitigating and slowing the spread of CWD in Idaho.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)—Clean Water Environmental Remediation

Per the governor's recommendation and as appropriated by the legislature in FY 2023, DEQ will use a total of $70 million of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support a variety of cleanup projects consistent with the intent of ARPA and using the broad range of project eligibilities as described in EPA's *Overview of Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Eligibilities* as a guide for remediation efforts where contamination is impacting surface water or ground water, or potentially impacting waters of the state. The goal of these projects is to take steps to manage potential sources of pollution and prevent these sources from reaching sources of drinking water, or otherwise potentially impacting ground water and surface water. The underlying premise is to fund a variety of water quality protection efforts to support access to clean drinking water and support making necessary investments in water and sewer infrastructure.

Coeur d'Alene Lake Nutrient Reduction Projects. As part of the "Leading Idaho" plan, Governor Little recommended $2,000,000 in state funding for DEQ to implement nutrient reduction projects in the Coeur d'Alene Basin in 2021. These projects will improve and protect water quality in Coeur d'Alene Lake. ARPA will provide at least an additional $31 million of funding to select more nutrient reduction projects using the process developed for selecting the initial projects. Projects are being identified through the Coeur d'Alene Lake Advisory Committee (CLAC) established by the August 20, 2021, Proclamation from Governor Little. Two project solicitations received proposals from various entities. In addition, DEQ evaluated the use of ARPA funding for projects related to recommendations in the National Academies of Sciences (NAS) Study for Coeur d'Alene Lake, including advanced treatment for wastewater dischargers, water quality assessment of near-shore and bay areas identified as data gaps, beach sampling identified as a data gap, and other projects specific to identifying water quality impacts and making improvements to water quality. Completing additional projects will result in more progress towards improving and protecting water quality in Coeur d'Alene Lake. Water quality data collected by DEQ and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe through the Lake Management Plan indicate that phosphorus concentrations in the lake north of the Coeur d'Alene River are increasing. Excess nutrients in Coeur d'Alene Lake pose a significant threat to long-term water quality due to the potential for heavy metals from legacy mining wastes being released from the lake sediments in low oxygen conditions. Nutrient

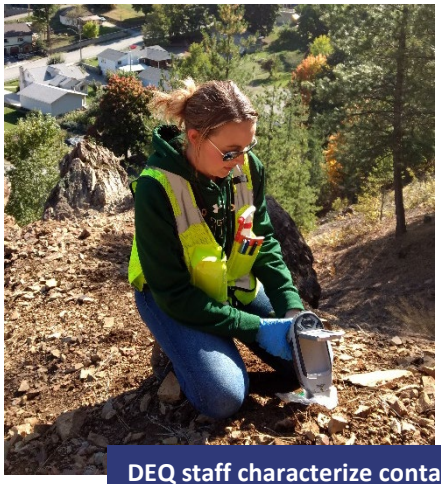
DEQ gives a tour of Bunker Hill Central Treatment Plant, which treats mine water and groundwater to remove metals to improve water quality in the South Fork Coeur d'Alene River.

reduction projects may include those that address both point source and nonpoint source nutrient loading to Coeur d'Alene Lake. Funding will be made available to cities, counties, utility districts, conservation districts, and other project sponsors in the Coeur d'Alene Basin.

Triumph Mine Site. Under the 1994 Memorandum of Agreement with EPA, the state took the lead for the cleanup of the Triumph Mine Site in Blaine County and is following the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act process for the cleanup. Cleanup actions are implemented following the 1998 Record of Decision for the Triumph Mine Site. Since the 2005 bankruptcy of ASARCO, Idaho is responsible for maintaining the mine water portion of the remedy, completing additional mine closure work, and for the soils component of the cleanup. ARPA funding is being used to address issues, recommendations, and follow-up actions identified in the 2019 Five-Year Review and to respond to requests from local residents and government. The funding is being used to determine a long-term solution for Triumph Tunnel, development of a long-term operations and maintenance program for the site, and additional assessment and cleanup actions related to management of mining impacted water and contaminated soils.

Solid waste sites. ARPA funding is currently being used for activities associated with closing certain municipal and nonmunicipal solid waste landfills at solid waste sites throughout the state. Activities include design and construction of final cover systems, and where applicable, post-closure ground water monitoring. Some previously closed landfills require assessments to determine potential impact to ground water and evaluate previously installed cover systems. ARPA funding is also being used to construct and install environmental protection systems such as liner and leachate collection systems at new regional municipal solid waste landfills.

Contaminated sites. This is a broad category of sites where groundwater has been or may be impacted by chemical releases. ARPA funds are currently being used at contaminated sites to conduct site assessments to better characterize the extent of contamination, conduct risk evaluations, and clean-up hazardous substances in soil and groundwater. Activities include sampling and installing groundwater monitoring wells; excavation, transportation, and disposal of any contamination soil encountered during cleanup activities; and the set-up and operation of cleanup systems, as necessary.



DEQ staff characterize contamination and conduct risk evaluations in continual efforts to clean up contaminated sites. Soils testing plays an important role in the site characterization process for areas impacted by legacy mining contamination.

Hazardous Waste Program Authorization.

The 1976 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) is a federal statute that defines hazardous waste and regulates its generation, transportation, treatment, storage, and disposal. RCRA provides a mechanism for individual states to manage their own hazardous waste program in lieu of EPA. Idaho can manage its own hazardous waste program if it is at least as stringent as RCRA. State-run programs must be authorized by EPA. The 1983 Hazardous Waste Management Act, Idaho Code

§ 39-4401 et. seq., directs DEQ to maintain authorization for the RCRA program. The authorization process requires states to submit to EPA a detailed description of the state's RCRA program capabilities. The criteria EPA uses to evaluate a state's program includes statutory, regulatory, financial, and staffing adequacies. As new RCRA regulations are promulgated by EPA and adopted by states, the states are required to submit revised authorization packages to EPA that reflect the state's ability to implement these new regulations. The Hazardous Waste Bureau is currently preparing a revised authorization application to administer the RCRA program in Idaho instead of EPA for all federal regulations adopted as of July 1, 2022.

Pharmaceutical Outreach to Health Care Facilities.

Businesses that generate pharmaceutical wastes must determine if they are hazardous and manage them accordingly. In 2019, EPA promulgated a new rule for managing hazardous waste pharmaceuticals from healthcare facilities and reverse distributors. Idaho adopted the rule in spring 2021. The DEQ Hazardous Waste Bureau provided outreach at the time of the rule incorporation. However, the outreach was limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Hazardous Waste Bureau plans to initiate additional outreach to healthcare facilities in 2023 and 2024. The Bureau will conduct a virtual outreach event focused on lessons learned from the rule application and will offer compliance assistance. Attendance will be encouraged through individual outreach to contacts at healthcare systems. The outreach success will be assessed in the scope of the strategic plan by compliance rates during subsequent visits.

DEQ offers outreach and training opportunities for the programs we regulate. Many of these opportunities are available both in-person and virtually to reach a wider audience.

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS)

In March 2023, EPA proposed new standards for PFAS in drinking water. EPA proposed two PFAS with traditional maximum contaminant levels (MCLs) and four PFAS using a Hazard Index. Perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) and perfluorooctanesulfonic acid (PFOS) are proposed with MCLs at 4 parts per trillion (ppt), and four additional PFAS using a Hazard Index, which is a calculated value. EPA intends to finalize the standards by the end of 2023 after public comments are received.

EPA provided DEQ with additional Public Water System Supervision funding to address emerging contaminants such as PFAS for the past three years. This additional funding has been used for a voluntary PFAS sampling program for Idaho's public water systems. Sampling began in April 2021 and will continue until funding is exhausted. Since April 2021, the bureau received permission to sample 350 public water system sources and received sample results for 300 of those sources. Of the 300 samples received, 39 had detections of PFAS. The number of results received represents approximately 9% of all public water system sources in Idaho. EPA will conduct further PFAS monitoring in public water systems through the Fifth Unregulated Contaminant Monitoring Rule between 2023 and 2025.

The US Department of Energy (DOE) will be addressing PFOA and PFOS contaminants in soil and groundwater at the Idaho National Laboratory in the future, including at sites that have already gone through remedial action where PFOA/PFOS constituents were not originally known to be contaminants of concern. DOE is following a national roadmap for their sites, including INL, starting with monitoring for PFOA/PFOS in drinking water wells. DOE has stated that initial results

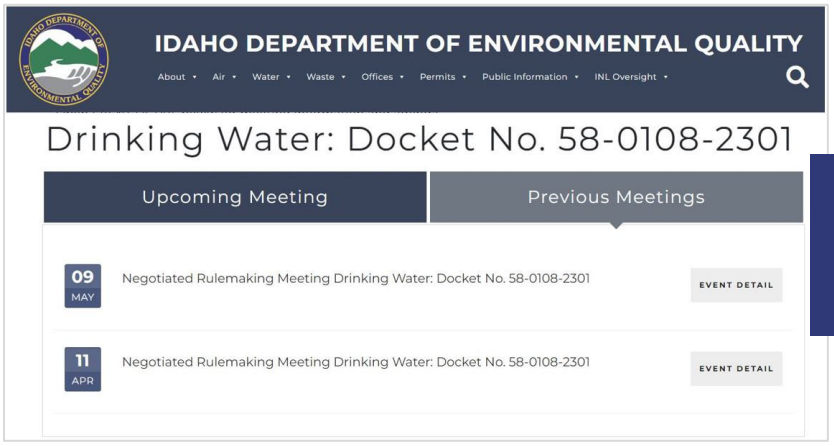
indicated detection of PFOA/PFAS in drinking water wells at INL at concentrations less than 4 parts per trillion (ppt). DOE is planning to conduct investigations equivalent to Preliminary Assessments/Site Investigations at INL over the next several years to determine likely historical sources of PFOA/PFOS at INL. Next steps may include additional groundwater monitoring for PFOA/PFOS constituents.

Rulemaking and Zero-Based Regulation (ZBR)

Per *Executive Order (EO) 2020-01*, Idaho agencies are required to perform a critical and comprehensive review of rule chapters to reduce overall regulatory burden, streamline various provisions, and increase clarity and ease of use. DEQ has three rule chapters going through this process in 2023, Rules Regulating Underground Storage Tank Systems (58.01.07), Idaho Rules for Public Drinking Water Systems (58.01.08), and Rules Regulating the Idaho Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (58.01.25).

In addition to the ZBR review, the Drinking Water rules will incorporate the new Lead Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) with this rulemaking. Looking forward, EPA announced their intent to finalize several rules in the next year including Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Rule, Lead and Copper Rule Improvements Rule and Revised Consumer Confidence Reporting Rule.

Additionally, EPA may announce this year additional drinking water rule revisions for the Microbial Disinfection Byproducts (MDBP) rules and a new Water System Restructuring Assessment (WSRA) rule.



During the rulemaking process, DEQ engages stakeholders through public meetings and comment periods. Our stakeholders play an important role in revising rules.

CONCLUSION

DEQ reports performance accountability to the state legislature through benchmark performance measures. This year staff worked across state and regional offices to successfully reach many of our new objectives, further develop existing objectives, and create new objectives that bring us closer to achieving meaningful performance measures. Our commitment to protecting public health and Idaho's environment is reaffirmed through the work we do, our partnerships, and the communities we work with. Our agencywide benchmark performance measures reflect tangible, achievable public health and environmental outcomes for Idaho and drive us to continue to improve and serve as a trusted resource for Idahoans.

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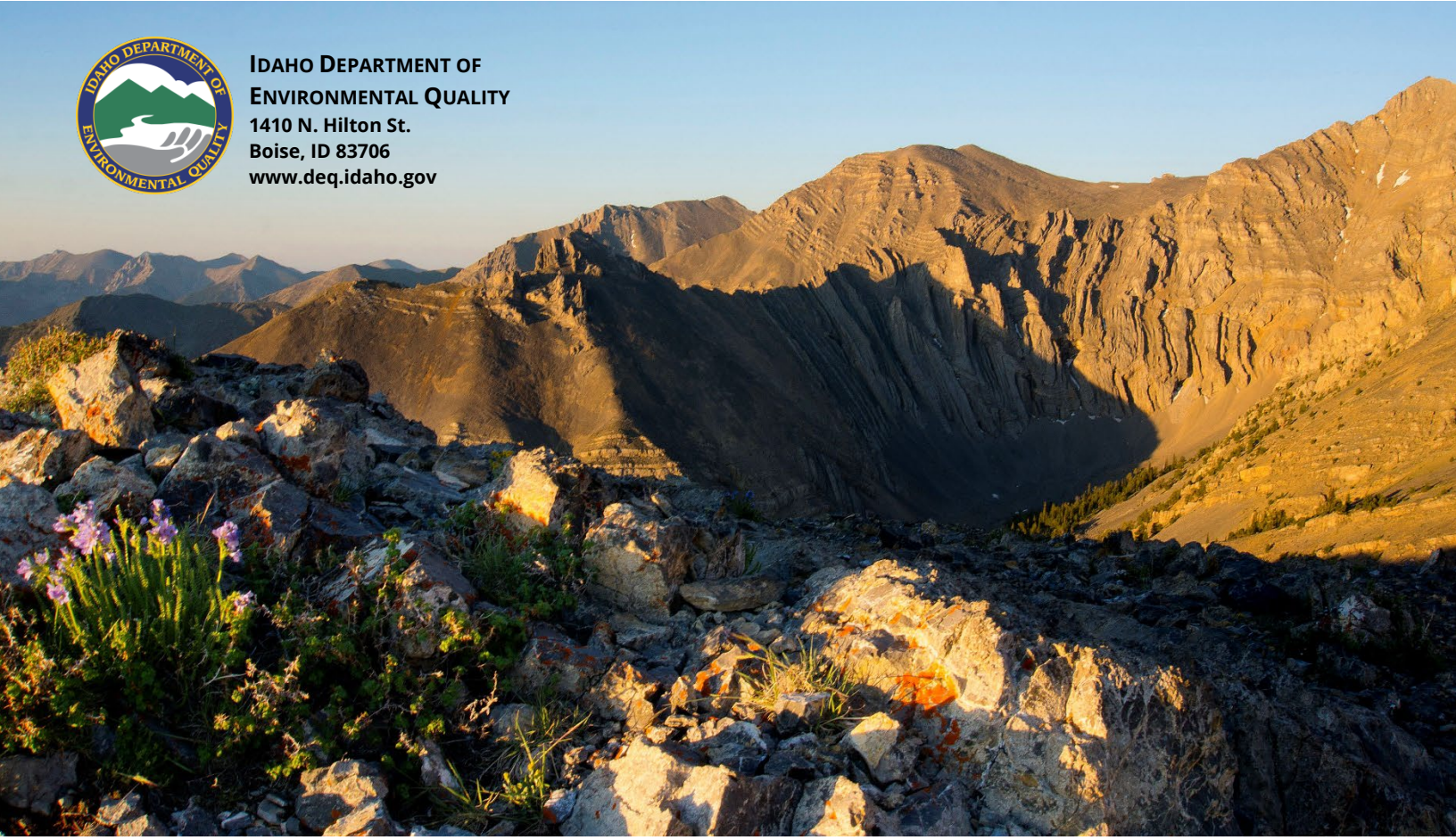

Your DEQ—PROTECT, ENHANCE, SUPPORT

While the core of DEQ's work is defined by our air quality, water quality, and waste and remediation management divisions, that work is sustained by support staff in the following areas:

- **INL Oversight—Independently evaluates the effectiveness of the Idaho National Laboratory's public health protection programs.**
- **Technical Services—Provides peer-reviewed scientific and engineering support to DEQ's air, water, and waste divisions and six regional offices.**
- **Pollution Prevention—Empowers businesses and citizens to engage in behaviors that protect public health and preserve Idaho's environment.**
- **Communications and Outreach—Raises awareness and understanding of health and environmental issues through social media and clear, concise documentation.**
- **Financial—Manages DEQ's budget and expenditures and facilitates grant applications and funds.**
- **Human Resources—Plans, develops, and implements a comprehensive human resource program for DEQ including recruitment, compensation, benefits, training, performance management, and employee relations.**
- **Facilities—Oversees buildings and communications systems and maintains vehicle fleet.**