

Focus on Clean Water



WHY IT MATTERS

The Wastewater Operator Certification Program is critical to making sure water is safe for the public and environment. A dedicated account would ensure that fees paid to the state are used to train and certify operators to protect public and environmental health.

Contact

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Special accommodations

To request ADA accommodation for disabilities, or printed materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at 360-407-6600 or visit <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/accessibility.html>. Persons with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. Persons with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

Create a Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification Account

Wastewater treatment (sewer) plant operations, regulated by the Department of Ecology, are our first line of defense to protect public health and keep our waters clean and healthy. Professional, state-certified treatment plant operators are responsible to run the plants to clean up sewer water before it is discharged back into the environment. Ecology's Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Certification Program makes sure that plant operators are fully trained and meet certification standards so they stay current on technical advances in operating practices to safely and effectively operate wastewater treatment plants. The program certifies approximately 2,000 professional operators who work at 265 wastewater plants across Washington.

The problem

- In 1986, the Legislature mandated that the Operator Certification Program fund itself through fees.
- Operator Certification fees currently go into the state general fund preventing us from recouping our full costs to administer the Operator Certification Program.
- Ecology's Water Quality Program state general fund appropriations have been reduced over the past three biennia to the point that the revenue no longer supports the program.
- Revenue to operate the program is being pulled from water quality permit fees and is not sustainable.
- Lack of adequate funding jeopardizes the program, and therefore public health and clean water.
- Each biennium Ecology collects \$138,000 in fees, and the cost to operate the certification program is over \$300,000.

The solution

Create a dedicated account in the state treasury for the Operator Certification Program fees assuring funding to support our program to protect public health and clean water.

Make sure the program is funded by operator certification fees as the Legislature mandated in 1986.

Prevent the loss of funding into the state treasury.

Ecology's proposal

Create a general fund account to contain all Wastewater Treatment Plant Certification Program Fees.

We do not recommend increasing fees at this time. We are only recommending the creation of a dedicated account.

Revenue would begin streaming into the account on July 1, 2017.

How it will benefit Washington

The Wastewater Operator Certification Program is critical to making sure water is safe for the public and environment. The program makes sure wastewater treatment plant operators have the necessary skills to operate complex water treatment systems so the wastewater that is discharged does not harm public health or the environment.

More Information

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/wastewater/op_cert/index.html