

Oregon Loan Fund Receives EPA's Sustainable Public Health Protection Award

by Roberto Reyes-Colón

Oregon's Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund was granted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Award for Sustainable Public Health Protection at the annual Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities conference Nov. 6, 2007, in Denver, Colorado. The award recognizes the unique and successful partnership that implemented Oregon's program; the Department of Human Services, the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department, and the Drinking Water Advisory Committee.

The award celebrates the successful work of the partnership in financing drinking water infrastructure projects. The Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund, implemented in 1997, has provided more than \$131 million to Oregon communities to meet safe drinking water standards by upgrading water distribution systems, installing and upgrading water treatment processes, improving water supply sources and protecting water supplies.

One of the primary objectives of the Oregon Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund is affordability. The program partnership developed a special assistance program for disadvantaged communities. Borrowers can qualify for loans at a 1 percent interest rate for 30 years,

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Fee for Sanitary Survey Inspections Proposed

by Dave Leland

The 2007 Legislature passed HB 2187, granting the Oregon Department of Human Services Drinking Water Program authority to charge a fee to cover the department's costs of conducting periodic sanitary survey inspections that are required by state and federal law of all public water systems. After the legislative session, the department convened a stakeholder work group to design the fee structure. That proposed fee structure is shown in the table at the top of page 3. Inspection frequency is determined by water system type and inspection findings, and is either once every three years or once every five years. Beginning in 2008, the department will inform water suppliers at the beginning of the year in which their inspection is scheduled, and invoice for the fee at the end of that year.

The department filed proposed rules to implement the fee, and will take written public comment until Jan. 17, 2008. In addition, the department will hold public hearings around the state in January in:

- Roseburg – Jan. 10
- Portland – Jan. 14
- Bend – Jan. 15

The department will file the final rule Feb. 15, 2008.

Sanitary surveys are a critical component of drinking water regulatory programs (see background on next page). The sanitary survey inspection fee is one component of the department's overall effort to build a state drinking water program that can effectively administer both state and federal drinking water regulations (see PIPELINE, Summer 2007). The 2004 Drinking Water Task Force identified sanitary surveys as a service of value to water suppliers. The task force suggested a fee structure with larger water system paying the full cost of their

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inspections, and smaller water systems paying a partial cost with the remainder funded with additional available federal funds (see PIPELINE, Spring 2004).

The stakeholder workgroup met in September-October of this year to finalize the fee schedule shown on opposite page. The workgroup included representatives of large and small water supplier organizations: the League of Oregon Cities, Special Districts Association of Oregon, Drinking Water Advisory Committee, Oregon Association of Water Utilities, Manufactured Housing Communities of Oregon, and the Oregon School Boards Association. The workgroup recommended that the department:

- Assure that sanitary survey inspections communicate key information, requirements, and recommendations that assist the water supplier to provide safe drinking water now and into the future;
- Recognize water suppliers who are outstanding performers based on EPA-established sanitary survey criteria, and do so in ways that the water supplier can communicate to their water users;
- Develop an alternative term for sanitary surveys for more effective communication to the public, such as “safe drinking water assessments”;
- Tailor the fee structure for larger water systems to account for water systems with less complexity, such as those without water treatment processes, and those that purchase all their water from other suppliers. Keep the fee for smaller water systems simple and understandable;
- Report regularly to the Drinking Water Advisory Committee on its performance on conducting sanitary survey inspections, on fee revenues and expenditures, and on staff time commitments; and
- Monitor the adequacy of the fee schedule to support inspection frequency and quality, and adjust fee levels as necessary.

Sanitary surveys: background

Sanitary surveys are a critical component of drinking water regulatory programs. When conducted properly and with appropriate follow-up, sanitary surveys:

- Reduce the risk of waterborne disease,
- Provide an opportunity to educate water system operators and managers,

- Identify water systems needing assistance, and
- Identify need for enforcement actions.

Under Oregon state law, a sanitary survey is “an on-site review of the source, facilities, equipment, operations, and maintenance of a water system, including land uses, for the purpose of evaluating the capability of that water system to produce and distribute safe drinking water” (ORS 448.115(10)). The department is required to “conduct periodic sanitary surveys of drinking water systems and sources, take water samples, and inspect records to insure that the system is not creating an unreasonable risk to health. The Department shall provide written records of such examinations to the local health administrator and the water supplier” (ORS 448.150(1)(a)).

Under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act rules for surface water treatment and for groundwater, states must complete sanitary surveys of all public water systems on the following schedule:

- Community water systems – every three years;
- Community water system with outstanding performance on prior sanitary surveys – every five years; and
- Non-community water systems – every five years.

The department is currently revising its report forms for documenting and presenting inspection findings. The report forms will cover the eight EPA-required elements (“EPA/State Joint Guidance on Sanitary Surveys, December 1995”):

- Water source;
- Treatment;
- Distribution system;
- Finished water storage;
- Pumps, pump facilities, and controls;
- Monitoring, reporting, and recordkeeping;
- Water system management and operations; and
- Operator compliance with state certification requirements.

Dave Leland is manager of the Drinking Water Program, 971-673-0415 or david.e.leland@state.or.us

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with up to \$250,000 (or 25 percent of the project cost, whichever is less) of principal forgiveness.

The Oregon program is unique because it allows communities to conduct their own income surveys if they feel that census data does not correctly reflect their specific economic situations. The result has been a remarkable \$68 million in additional loans to more than 40 disadvantaged communities.

Information on the Safe Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund can be obtained by calling Roberto Reyes-Colón, program analyst, at 971-673-0422, or by e-mailing Roberto.reyes-colon@state.or.us.

Roberto Reyes-Colón is the loan fund coordinator for the Drinking Water Program, 971-673-0422 or roberto.reyes-colon@state.or.us

Proposed Sanitary Survey Inspection Fee Schedule

Water System Type:	Number of connections	Fee
Noncommunity (Transient, non-transient, and non-EPA)	Not applicable	\$150
Community (250 or fewer connections)	15-250	\$150
Community (no water treatment)	251-500	\$675
	501-1000	\$900
	1001-3000	\$1200
	>3000	\$1800
Community (with source and treatment)	251-500	\$900
	501-1000	\$1200
	1001-3000	\$1600
	>3000	\$2400
Community (purchasing exclusively)	251-500	\$540
	501-1000	\$720
	1001-3000	\$960
	>3000	\$1440

Training calendar

CEUs for Water System Operators

Check www.oesac.com for new offerings approved for drinking water.

OAWU - 503-873-8353

- Jan. 8 Source Water Protection Planning
- Jan. 22-24 Small Water System O&M Distribution Short School
- Jan. 29 Control Valves by GC Systems
- Feb. 12 Safe Drinking Water Act
- Mar. 3-7 30th Annual Management and Technical Conference

OCT Academy - 866-266-0028

- Mar. 20 Activated Sludge
- Mar. 21 Pumps and Motors
- Mar. 28 Collection Test

Backflow Management Inc. - 503-255-1619

- Mar. 11-12 Repair Basics for Backflow Assemblies
- Mar. 13 Confined Space Entry Safety

Cross Connection/Backflow Courses

Backflow Management Inc. (B) - 503-255-1619

Backflow Assembly Tester Course

- Jan. 7-11 Portland (B)
- Mar. 3-7 Portland (B)

Cross Connection Inspector Course

- Feb. 18-21 Redmond (B)
- Feb. 25-28 Portland (B)



Department of Human Services
Drinking Water Program
PO Box 14450
Portland, OR 97293-0450

Meeting calendar

Drinking Water Advisory Committee
Department of Human Services
Diane Weis, 971-673-0427

- Jan. 9, 2008
- July 9, 2008
- Apr. 9, 2008
- Oct. 8, 2008

All committee meetings are held at the Public Utility Commission Office,
550 Capitol St. NE, Salem, OR 97310.

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