



January 21, 2026

Idaho Legislature
Senate Health and Welfare Committee
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, ID 83720

Subject: Support for Pending Rules of the Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals – IDAPA 24.05.01

Dear Chairman VanOrden and Committee Members:

The Idaho Rural Water Association (IRWA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization established in 1987 to provide training and technical assistance to public drinking water and wastewater utilities across Idaho. IRWA prioritizes utilities serving communities of fewer than 10,000 residents. Given the rural nature of our state, IRWA supports over 90 percent of Idaho's public drinking water and wastewater utilities. As representatives of Idaho's drinking water and wastewater operators, it is our duty to scrutinize changes to operational licensing code that may impact our member utilities and the industry's ability to serve communities with safe, reliable drinking water and wastewater management.

Idaho's nearly 2,000 public drinking water and wastewater systems must be operated under the supervision of a licensed Responsible Charge Operator (RCO), as overseen by the Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses (DOPL). IRWA worked closely with our member utilities and other stakeholders to participate in the rulemaking process last year. We commend the Board of Water and Wastewater Professional representatives and DOPL staff for facilitating a more transparent and collaborative process than was available during the initial Zero-Based Rule (ZBR) making efforts.

IRWA supports the pending rules, which reduce regulatory burden to utilities by clarifying RCO requirements, reducing system classifications, and streamlining the process for obtaining higher levels of licensure. These improvements will help address challenges faced by many drinking water and wastewater utility systems across the state, the majority of which struggle with a limited workforce pool.

Considering the Board's cash balance has declined significantly since the transition to DOPL from the Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses (IBOL), we recognize the need to adjust fees to return the Board's cash balance to a positive position, consistent with legislative direction. Acknowledging fees paid in Idaho are lower than those paid in neighboring states, IRWA supports the fee increase as presented.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Committee to support the pending rules for the Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals as presented.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shelley Roberts".

Shelley Roberts
Chief Executive Officer
Idaho Rural Water Association