

May 14, 2020

**Caption:** **ISSUE ANALYSIS**  
**APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED FINAL DRAFT FY 2020 STATE DRINKING WATER PLANNING GRANT PRIORITY LIST**  
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**Issue:** The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has prepared the **FINAL DRAFT FY 2021 STATE DRINKING WATER PLANNING GRANT PRIORITY LIST.**

The question before the Board is the following: **Should the Final Draft FY 2021 State Drinking Water Planning Grant Priority List be approved as presented?**

**Issue Discussion:**

The Department was given authority to establish such a program by the 2000 Legislature in Senate Bill 1378.

Planning grant assistance is important for many communities in their efforts to understand the scope and need for drinking water infrastructure improvements. Once communities have completed critical planning work, they may choose to move to the design and construction phases using DEQ's state revolving fund loan program. This will both speed the correction of deficiencies in many public water systems in Idaho and increase participation in the drinking water loan program.

The projects on the list were identified through a **Letter of Interest** form sent directly to DEQ from the entities in Idaho who are eligible to be on the list.

**Relevant Statutes:**

Title 39, Chapter 36, Idaho Code, provides for adoption of "Rules for Administration of Planning Grants for Public Drinking Water Facilities," IDAPA 58.01.22.

**Public Notification:**

The public was notified of the availability of the list and related information through notices in six (6) Idaho regional newspapers published once per week for three consecutive weeks. Additionally, email notices were sent to numerous stakeholders. Notification of the availability of the list and the related Intended Use Plan were also placed on DEQ website for four weeks. The website was set up to allow for public comment. In the newspaper notices and on our website the public was invited to review copies of the list and related information at the website and in our Regional Offices.

**Public Hearing:**

The Department elected not to have a public hearing this year unless requested to do so by the public. No requests for a hearing were received.

**Consistency  
With Federal  
Requirements:**

The operation of the Drinking Water Planning Grant effort is consistent with federal and state requirements.

**Temporary  
Rule  
Justification:**

Not applicable.

**Cost Impact:**

Approval of the list by the Board has a direct impact upon Idaho citizens in communities included on the final list. Approval will help assure that a pool of eligible entities is available to receive state financial assistance for drinking water planning projects.

**Alternatives:**

1. Reject the proposed list for drinking water grants. Under this alternative, DEQ will be unable to award drinking water planning grants during FY 2021. Idaho communities would have to self-fund Drinking Water planning grants, and it is likely that fewer communities would be eligible to enter into a Drinking Water SRF loan.
2. Adopt the proposed list for drinking water grants. Under this alternative, DEQ will be able to offer grants to communities to complete their facility planning, the critical first step in any project. This will act as a catalyst for building needed drinking water facilities thus correcting existing public health and water quality problems related to drinking water treatment and distribution in Idaho's communities.

**Recommendation:**

DEQ recommends **Alternative 2**, since it will result in continuing efforts to correct public health problems related to drinking water.

**Comments Received**

One public comment regarding reconsideration of total points for the Garden Valley School District. An additional 8 points were added to the District's total score. The additional points did not move the District into the fundable range.

**SUMMARY – DRINKING WATER GRANT LIST**

All 22 projects on the list have received thorough review by DEQ's Regional Offices and have been peer reviewed by DEQ State Office staff. Ratings have been compiled under the criteria outlined in the **Rules for Administration of Planning Grants for Drinking Water Facilities, IDAPA 58.01.22**.