

# **Statement Regarding Curtailment of Connections**

## **Eastern Idaho Regional Waste Water Authority**

**June 22, 2022**

The Eastern Idaho Regional Waste Water Authority (EIRWWA) provides sewage treatment service to customers in its service area which includes the City of Shelley and portions of the City of Ammon, Bonneville County, and Bingham County. EIRWWA's Oxbow Treatment Plant is located west of Shelley on the banks of the Snake River. Wastewater collected from EIRWWA's service area enters the plant where it is screened, aerated, filtered, and disinfected before being discharged to the river.

At its monthly meeting on June 16, 2022, the EIRWWA managing board reviewed recent data regarding the current flows and loadings entering the treatment plant which indicated the available capacity at the plant may be nearly depleted. To protect the integrity of the plant and maintain adequate treatment, the board took action to curtail adding further connections to the system that have not already been approved by EIRWWA. Several factors have contributed to this situation.

One factor is the recent high growth and demand for connections in EIRWWA's service area. As a result, the strength of the wastewater entering the plant has increased significantly, reaching the design loading of the plant. In previous years, approximately 100 to 300 connections have been added to EIRWWA each year. However, EIRWWA currently has approximately 500 connections approved which will likely be added in the next year with more being requested each month.

A second factor is the impact to the plant that occurred around February 14, 2022 when it received an illegal discharge of wastewater containing chemicals and oils which coated the treatment membranes and impacted the treatment process. Since then, the plant which relies on various biological processes and microorganisms has been in and continues to be in recovery of the biologics, and the treatment process is still compromised.

A third factor is the lack of funding that has been available to implement a full-scale project to increase the plant's capacity. EIRWWA completed a study in 2018 which identified upgrades to the biological basins, treatment membranes, and headworks needed to increase its capacity. This project is currently estimated to cost \$35 million, and EIRWWA has been aggressively pursuing options for funding to complete the upgrades.

EIRWWA was originally organized and currently functions under Idaho Code as a joint powers authority with the City of Ammon, the City of Shelley, Bonneville County, and Bingham County as its four member entities. As a joint powers authority, EIRWWA is not eligible to directly receive state or federal funding. However, with its member entities transferring a portion of their federal funds received from the America Rescue Plan Act, EIRWWA now has sufficient funds to implement an initial phase of the project which will upgrade the biological basins. EIRWWA is in the process of completing design of these improvements and selecting a construction management firm with the goal of completing this initial phase in 2023.

In the recent May election, voters approved EIRWWA to proceed with reorganizing as a sewer district as required by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, and the district formation process is currently underway. As a district, EIRWWA will be eligible to directly apply for funding for the remaining phases of upgrades that are needed. If funding can be secured and current supply chain delays for equipment can be overcome, EIRWWA is targeting 2025 for completion of plant expansion.

In the meantime, EIRWWA is actively evaluating short-term measures to optimize the operation of the plant and add temporary infrastructure to increase capacity until the full upgrades can be completed. The full impact of these measures on the capacity and on the current curtailment policy is still being evaluated.

The curtailment of connections does not apply to homes that have already received approval to connect to EIRWWA and may already be under construction. Updated information and any potential adjustments to this policy will be provided when available.