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Oregon: Focusing on Water Reuse

Presented by Hayley Siltanen

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Environment

Drought declarations expand as Oregon deals with the aftermath of historically warm winter

KLCC | By Zac Ziegler
Published April 29, 2026 at 3:37 PM PDT

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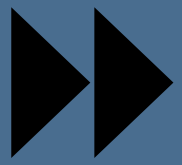
Agenda



History of Water Reuse Regulation in Oregon



Current Framework for Water Reuse



Next Steps for Water Reuse

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History of Water Reuse Regulation In Oregon



State Agencies

- DEQ - Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
- OWRD - Oregon Water Resources Department
- OHA - Oregon Health Authority
- ODFW – Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

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History of Water Reuse in Oregon

- 1990 – DEQ Rules for Recycled Water
- 1991 – Senate Bill 204 (ORS 537.131, 537.132)
- 2003 – Senate Bill 820
- 2005 - Governor’s Executive Order 05-04
- 2008 – DEQ Modern Rules for Recycled Water (OAR 340-055)
- 2011 – DEQ Rules for Graywater (OAR 340-053)

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History of Water Reuse in Oregon

- 2023 – House Bill 2010, Section 22
  - Directed DEQ, in consultation with OWRD and other agencies and interested parties, to "address barriers to, and develop technical assistance resources to support, expanded beneficial water reuse or recycled water programs and projects"
  - Funding for one fixed-duration position
- 2025 – House Bill 2169
  - Building on efforts under HB 2010, Sec 22

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Current Framework for Water Reuse

Types of Reuse



Graywater

Water from showers, baths, bathroom and kitchen sinks, and laundries.



Municipal Recycled Water

Treated effluent from a municipal wastewater treatment facility.



Industrial Water Reuse

Treated effluent from an industrial process, manufacturer or business, or from the development or recovery of any natural resource.

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Municipal Recycled Water

OWRD focuses on water ***quantity***

Uses the term "***reclaimed water***":

> "water that has been used for **municipal** purposes and after such use has been treated in a treatment works * * * and that, as a result of treatment is suitable for direct beneficial purpose or a controlled use that could not otherwise occur."

ORS 537.131

DEQ focuses on water ***quality***

Uses the term "***recycled water***":

> "treated effluent from a **wastewater treatment system** which as a result of treatment is suitable for a direct beneficial purpose. Recycled water includes reclaimed water as defined in ORS 537.131."

OAR 340-055-0010(13)

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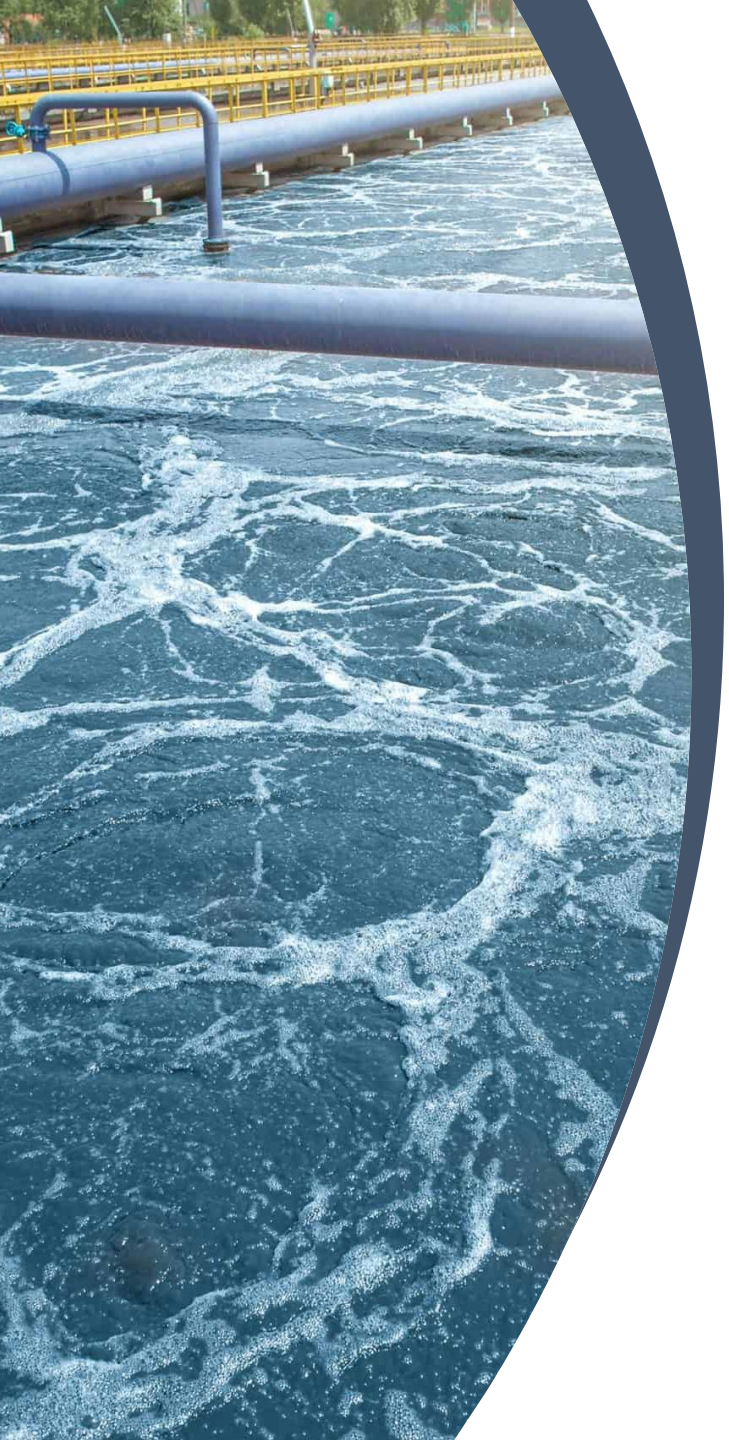
OWRD Regulation of Municipal Recycled Water



Remember that "reclaimed water" is the same as "recycled water" in this context

- Unless otherwise exempted, Oregon law requires a permit to acquire the right to the beneficial use of any surface waters of the state. ORS 537.130.
- Limited exemption for "reclaimed water." ORS 537.132.
- Requirements:
  - water quality regulations are met under the applicable discharge permit;
  - no adverse effects on fish and wildlife;
  - reuse is intended to improve the water quality of the receiving stream.
- Registration for the use of reclaimed water is also required.
- Limited downstream injury test.

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DEQ Recycled Water Program (OAR 340-055)

"Recycled water" is:

- treated effluent;
- from a wastewater treatment system;
- that is suitable for a direct beneficial purpose as a result of treatment.

Recycled water use in Oregon requires, at minimum:

- A National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) or Water Pollution Control Facilities (WPCF) permit; and
- A Recycled Water Use Plan.

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DEQ Recycled Water Program (OAR 340-055)

"* * * to **encourage the use of recycled water** for domestic, agricultural, industrial, recreational, and other beneficial purposes in a manner which **protects public health and the environment** of the state. The use of recycled water for beneficial purposes will **improve water quality** by reducing discharge of treated effluent to surface waters, **reduce the demand on drinking water sources** for uses not requiring potable water, and may **conserve stream flows** by reducing withdrawal for out-of-stream use."

OAR 340-055-0070

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Classes of Recycled Water

Table 3. Recycled water Classes identified in rule, based upon level of treatment.

	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Nondisinfected
Former Level	IV	III	II	Enhanced I	I
Oxidized					
Disinfected					
Filtered					
Turbidity (NTU)					
24-hr mean	2				
5% of time during a 24-hr period	5				
Maximum at any time	10				
Monitoring Frequency	hourly				
Total coliform (organisms/100 mL)					
7-day median	2.2	2.2	23		
Maximum in any sample	23	23			
Maximum in 2-consecutive			240		
Monitoring Frequency	daily	3/wk	1/wk		
E. coli					
30-day log mean				126	
Maximum in any sample				406	
Monitoring Frequency				1/wk	
Beneficial Purposes	More				Less
Conditions on use	Less Restrictive				More Restrictive

Source:
2009 DEQ Internal Management Directive;
OAR 340-055-0012

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Table 2. Recycled water beneficial uses identified in rule.

Beneficial Purpose	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Nondisinfected
Irrigation					
Fodder, fiber, seed crops not intended for human ingestion, commercial timber	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Firewood, ornamental nursery stock, Christmas trees	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Sod	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Pasture for animals	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Processed food crops	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Orchards or vineyards if an irrigation method is used to apply recycled water directly to the soil	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Golf courses, cemeteries, highway medians, industrial or business campuses	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Any agricultural or horticultural use	Yes	No	No	No	No
Parks, playgrounds, school yards, residential landscapes, other landscapes accessible to the public	Yes	No	No	No	No

Source:
2009 DEQ Internal Management Directive

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Table 2. Recycled water beneficial uses identified in rule.

Beneficial Purpose	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Nondisinfected
Industrial, Commercial, or Construction					
Industrial cooling	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Rock crushing, aggregate washing, mixing concrete	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Dust control	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Nonstructural fire fighting using aircraft	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Street sweeping or sanitary sewer flushing	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Stand alone fire suppression systems in commercial and residential buildings	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Non-residential toilet or urinal flushing, floor drain trap priming	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Commercial car washing	Yes	No	No	No	No
Fountains when the water is not intended for human consumption	Yes	No	No	No	No

Source:
2009 DEQ Internal Management Directive

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Table 2. Recycled water beneficial uses identified in rule.

Beneficial Purpose	Class A	Class B	Class C	Class D	Nondisinfected
Impoundments or Artificial Groundwater Recharge					
Water supply for landscape impoundments including, but not limited to, golf course water ponds and non-residential landscape ponds	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Restricted recreational impoundments	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Nonrestricted recreational impoundments including, but not limited to, recreational lakes, water features accessible to the public, and public fishing ponds	Yes	No	No	No	No
Artificial groundwater recharge	Yes	No	No	No	No

Source:
2009 DEQ Internal Management Directive

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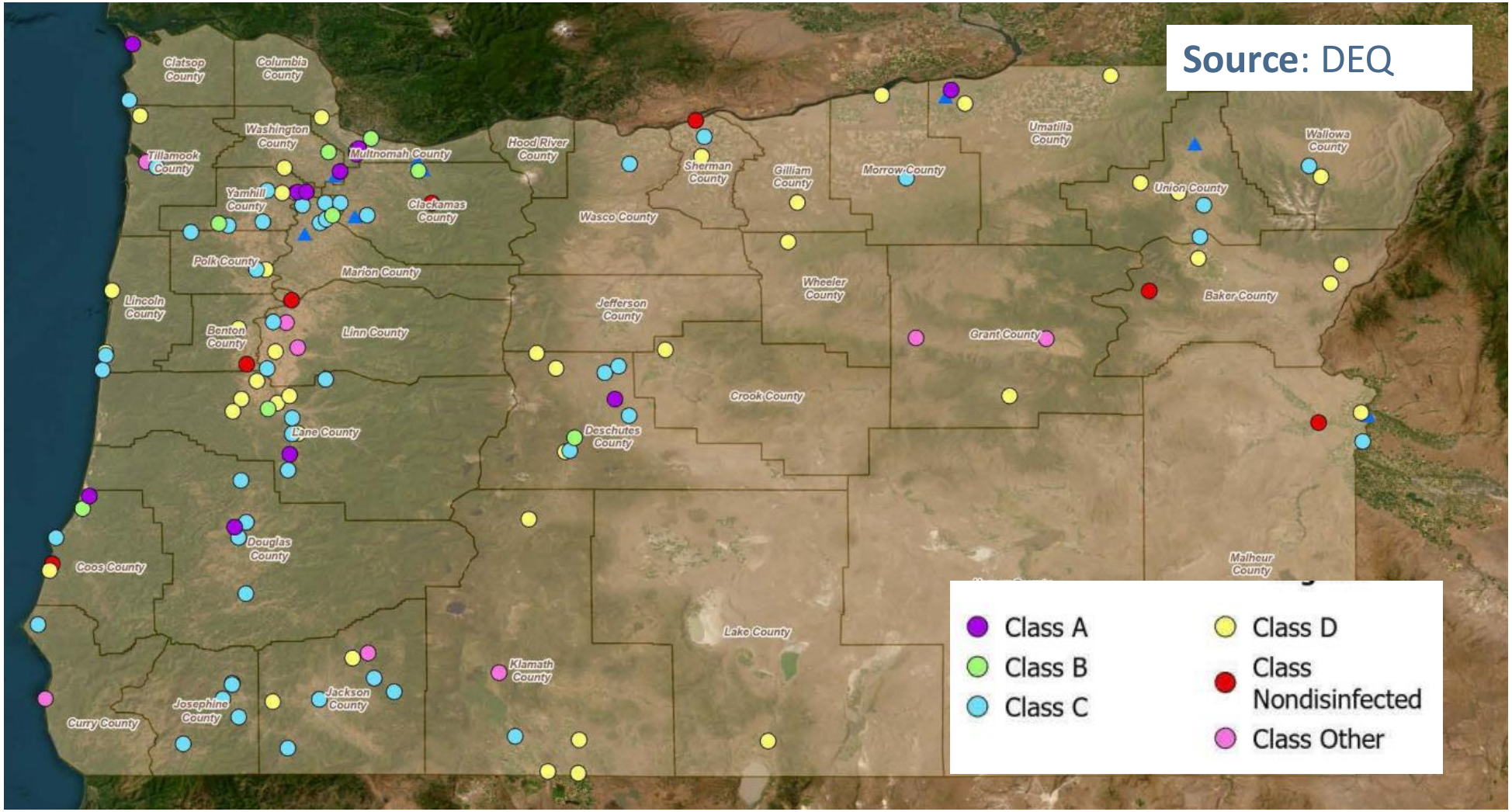


Recycled Water Use Plan

- A Recycled Water Use Plan (RWUP) explains how the wastewater treatment facility and recycled water user(s) will comply with DEQ's recycled water rules (OAR 340-055) and describes operational details of the recycled water program.
- Conditions in a RWUP are NPDES or WPCF permit requirements and are enforceable. OAR 340-055-0025(4).

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Oregon Recycled Water Facility Map



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Types of Reuse



Graywater

Water from showers, baths, bathroom and kitchen sinks, and laundries.



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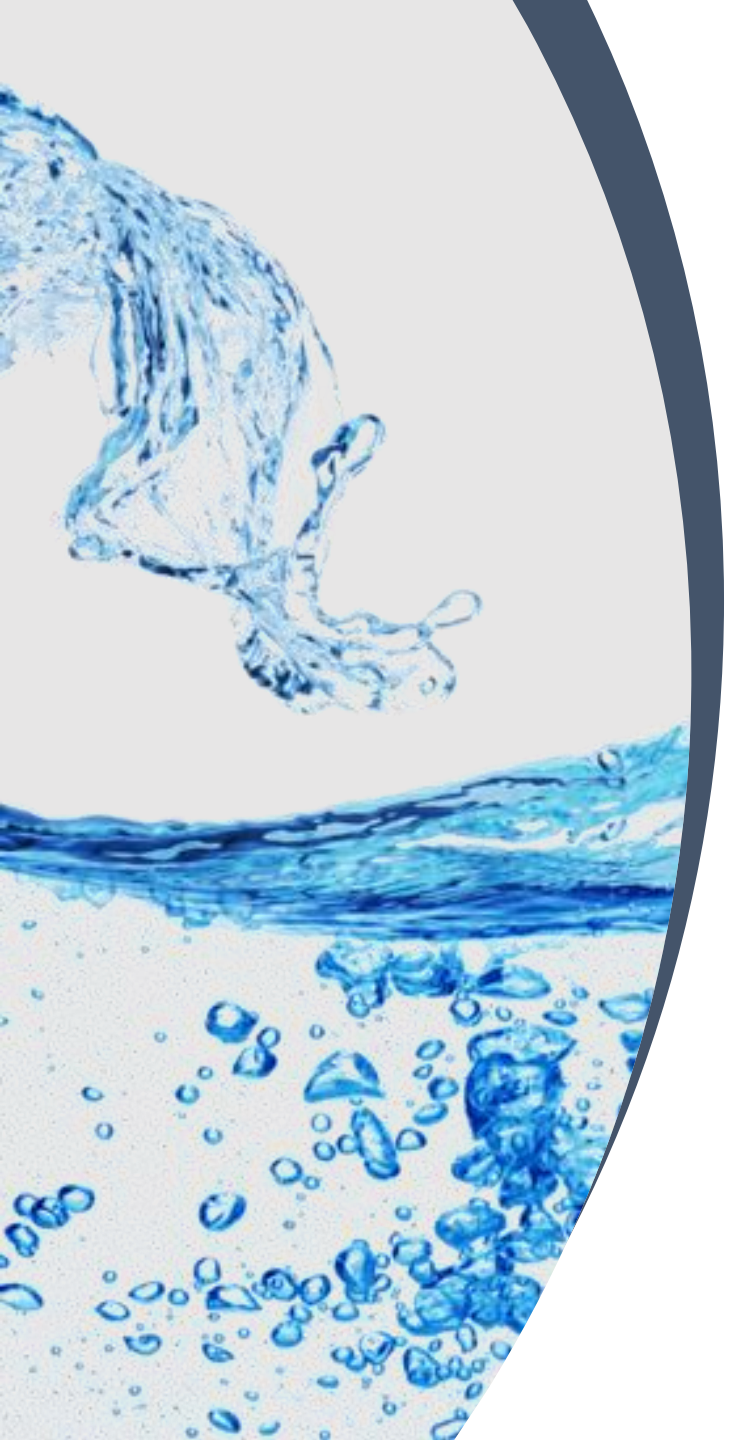
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Industrial Water Reuse

- **OWRD** focuses on water ***quantity***
- Authorizes limited use of **groundwater** for irrigation use reuse

- **DEQ** focuses on water ***quality***
- Regulates industrial water reuse as wastewater through NPDES or WPCF permits

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OWRD: Industrial Water Reuse

- ORS 537.141(1)(i), 537.545(1)(g) allow:
  - Land application of **groundwater**;
  - Appropriated under a water right issued for **industrial** or **CAFO** use;
  - For **irrigation** during a period in which the **reused water has never been discharged to waters of the state**; and
  - If water is applied pursuant to **water quality or CAFO permit**.

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DEQ: Industrial Water Reuse

- DEQ regulates reuse of industrial water through NPDES or WPCF water quality permitting.
- No regulations or guidance specific to industrial waster reuse.

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Next Steps for Water Reuse in Oregon

HB 2010, Sec 22 - 2024 Legislative Report

Priority Projects:

1. **Water reuse augmentation of irrigation canals** to support agricultural uses and offset surface and groundwater extraction during summer months.
2. **New class of water reuse** with additional treatment standards, such that no additional use restrictions would apply beyond end of pipe.
3. Water reuse for **constructed wetlands or other environmental restoration/enhancement** projects.
4. **Streamlined procedure** for permitting water reuse projects.
5. Identify standards and clear guidance for **industrial water reuse** so businesses can make educated decisions on the potential benefits of reusing their treated effluent for land applications and offset surface and groundwater extraction**.**

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2024 Legislative Report

<u>Priority</u>: Providing Reused Water to Irrigation Canals

<u>Case Study</u>: City of Hermiston / West Extension Irrigation District

- WEID supplies water to >10,000 acres; facing diminished water availability for its patrons
- City of Hermiston has been providing Class A reuse water to WEID =since 2016
  - 2024 – WEID reported receiving ~1,100 acre-feet (enough to irrigate 369 acres of land at 3.0 acre-feet/acre)

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2024 Legislative Report

Priority: Providing Reused Water to Irrigation Canals

Challenges:

- "Waters of the State"/WOTUS
- Reclamation requirements
- Grower contracts
- Consumer perceptions

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2024 Legislative Report

Priority: Industrial Reuse

Challenges:

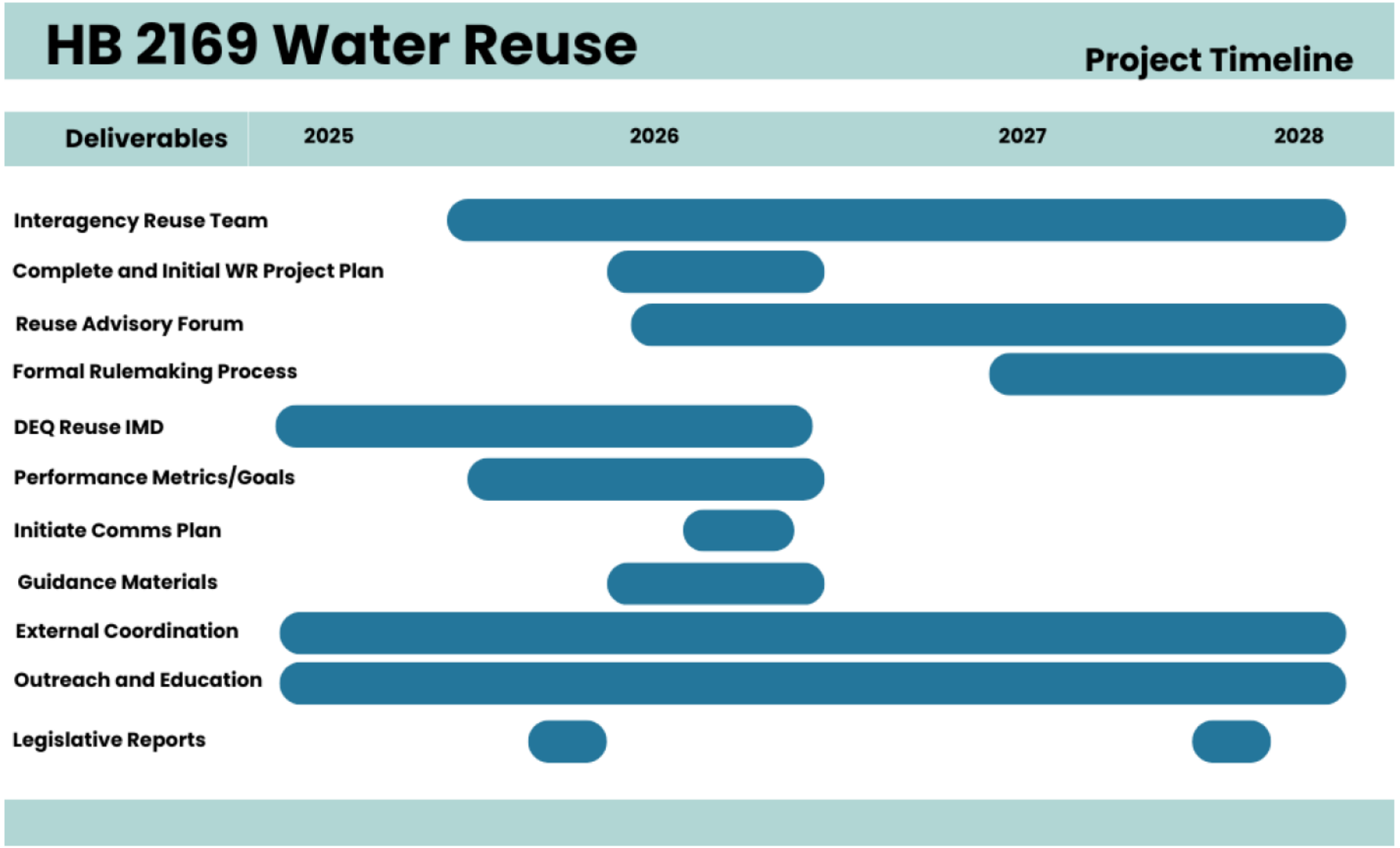
- There are no specific regulations addressing industrial water reuse.
- Permits are required for any usage or discharge of industrial water outside of industrial structures.
- DEQ currently includes monitoring and reporting requirements in individual water quality permits for industries—but these are imposed inconsistently across the state.

Recommendation:

- "Identify standards and clear guidance information for industrial water reuse . . ."

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HB 2169 – Looking Foward



Source:
2025 Legislative Report

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Questions?



Hayley Siltanen

(503) 294-9218

hayley.siltanen@stoel.com

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