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I'm writing to OPPOSE the newly proposed rule that would have the DEQ charge fees for records about enforcement, rule-making, permitting processes, etc. The DEQ is a PUBLIC, STATE supported department whose decisions and procedures should be not just public record, but AVAILABLE public record, including email and electronic communications AT NO CHARGE.

This is important because it is the public, whose land, water and air is being monitored and who depend on the DEQ to be responsive to public input, not just input from the industries that they monitor.

To that end, all records and decision-making should not only be at no cost, but should be available immediately to the public with a process in place that insures enough time for public groups and individuals to read the records and have access to all the available information.

Any move to restrict the information or charge for access to it is clearly just a way for the process to become more opaque to watch-dog groups and land owners and citizens of the State. This is the complete opposite of what is needed and goes against the mandate for open records in State government. We need MORE participation by citizens not less and MORE cooperation from government departments to encourage that! --Maria Katherman