



NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Idaho Water Resource Board to Hold Statewide Public Meetings on Proposed Sustainability Policy Addition to State Water Plan**

BOISE - (June 2, 2016) - At the request of Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter, the Idaho Water Resource Board has drafted a new Sustainability Policy that will guide the Board in water planning and management efforts in the future. Over the summer, the Water Resource Board will hold a series of seven public meetings throughout the state to inform citizens about the draft policy and gather public input.

The first series of meetings are set for 6:30-8:30 p.m. at the following locations:

- June 7th in Boise at the Idaho Water Center, Room 602.
- June 13th in Hailey at the Community Campus, Minnie Moore Room.
- June 28th in Twin Falls at the College of Southern Idaho, Shields Building, Room 118.

More meetings are planned in July and August in Northern Idaho and Eastern Idaho. Governor Otter underscored the importance of a Sustainability Policy for water management in his State of the State address to the Idaho Legislature earlier this year.

"The draft policy sets an overall statewide vision for achieving sustainability of our water resources so we have adequate water supplies to meet existing and future water needs," said Water Resource Board member Vince Alberdi of Twin Falls, who sat on a Board subcommittee that shaped the draft plan.

The draft policy is three pages long, beginning with a policy statement, implementation strategies and key milestones listed as goals moving forward in water planning and management, including the protection of private property rights, the wise use of water to meet a multiplicity of interests and accommodating growth. Following public meetings, the policy will be finalized and presented to the 2017 Legislature as an addition to the State Water Plan.

The overarching themes of the draft policy are as follows: "Sustainability focuses on the overall

stewardship of the state's water resources for the good of the people of the State of Idaho. Sustainability is the active stewardship of Idaho's water resources to satisfy current uses and assure future uses of this renewable resource in accordance with state law and policy."

In addition, the draft policy says, "The goal of sustainable use of water resources of the state must recognize that the goals of sustainable economic growth and protection of existing rights must coexist and are enhanced by measures that protect and maintain surface and ground water resources and the aquatic, riparian and human resources that depend on these water resources. Recognizing these needs will promote economic and environmental security and enhance the quality of life for the people of the State of Idaho."

Neeley Miller, a staff member in the Board's Planning and Projects Bureau, drafted the policy with the guidance of the Board's Sustainability subcommittee. He incorporated some ideas in the draft policy after meeting with cities and companies that have water sustainability policies, including Idaho Power Co., Clear Springs Foods, J.R. Simplot Co., and the cities of Meridian and Hailey.

Water Resource Board member Albert Barker, who sat on the Sustainability subcommittee, said the Board is focused on best management practices for all water resources in the future in the face of growth and limited supply.

"A lot of what's been done in the past is to make sure we are using the resource wisely," Barker said. "There's a lot of new technology that could be adopted to be more efficient in our use of water. But you have to be careful about that. One man's waste is another man's gain. The question is what can be done better? What can we do on the ground to stretch our water resources even farther into the future?"

A copy of the draft Sustainability policy will be added to the Board's web site this week:  
[http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/waterboard/WaterPlanning/StateWaterPlanning/State\\_Planning.htm](http://www.idwr.idaho.gov/waterboard/WaterPlanning/StateWaterPlanning/State_Planning.htm)

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