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NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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IDWR extends public comment period to mid-July re: proposed designation of West Ada Area of Drilling Concern

BOISE - (June 15, 2016) - The Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) is extending the public comment deadline 30 days -- until end of business on July 15, 2016 -- to receive feedback about the possible establishment of an Area of Drilling Concern in the Meridian area.

After receiving a petition to create an Area of Drilling Concern by the City of Meridian, IDWR, led by hearing officer Jeff Peppersack, conducted a public hearing on June 1, 2016, as required by Idaho Code. At the public hearing Tom Neace the Manager for IDWR's Ground Water Protection Section, presented technical and regulatory information regarding the proposed designation of the West Ada Area of Drilling Concern. Kyle Radek, Assistant City Engineer with the City of Meridian, also presented at hearing, discussing Meridian's motivation in filing the petition to protect the water quality of the ground water resources in the area. In response to requests voiced by the public at the June 1 hearing, IDWR is extending the public comment period to ensure that any and all interested parties have time to learn about the proposal and submit written comments. Comments should be directed to the IDWR hearing officer, Jeff Peppersack at IDWR, P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID 83720-0098, or by email at: IDWRInfo@idwr.idaho.gov.

Background: The City of Meridian petitioned the Director of IDWR to create the Area of Drilling Concern (ADC) after completing a ground water investigation. Its findings concluded that:

- Some aquifers underlying the Meridian area are contaminated by naturally occurring arsenic and uranium, as well as anthropogenic contamination including nitrate, pesticides, herbicides, chlorinated solvents, bacteria and other pathogens.

- Current well industry practices are insufficient to protect ground water quality. Specific drilling and well construction methods and well-sealing requirements are necessary to protect ground water resources.
- The designation of an ADC is necessary to protect the deeper aquifers used for municipal drinking water supplies.

Wells drilled or modified in a designated ADC may be subject to specific well construction requirements in accordance with Idaho Code and the Idaho Well Construction Standards Rules. The Director of IDWR has the statutory authority to designate an ADC to protect public health and to prevent waste or contamination of ground or surface water.

To view the proposed West Ada Area of Drilling Concern, see a map of the proposed area, and the IDWR staff evaluation, go to the IDWR website at idwr.idaho.gov/wells/areas-of-drilling-concern.html. For more information contact Tom Neace at 208-287-4935.

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