



NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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36 ground water users in ESPA region face curtailment for failing to install ground water flow meters; most water users in compliance

BOISE – (Aug. 8, 2018) – The Idaho Department of Water Resources has sent a curtailment order to 36 water users diverting ground water from the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA). The order, dated July 31, instructs watermasters to shut-off diversions from the ground water wells beginning on Aug. 6 for failing to install department-approved flow meters by the beginning of the 2018 irrigation season, officials said.

IDWR Director Gary Spackman authorized watermasters in Water Districts 100, 110, 120, 130 and 140 to shut off and seal the wells listed in the curtailment order. Thirty-three ground water wells are affected by the order; some of the affected water users are operating more than one well.

“Ground water users who are on the non-compliance list need to immediately install a measuring device, or obtain a variance or extension. Diversion of water from any well not in compliance will be curtailed,” Spackman said.

Two years ago, Spackman issued an order requiring flow meters to be installed on qualifying ground water wells in the ESPA region by the beginning of the 2018 irrigation season. Ground water flow meters also were required in the 2015 historic water settlement agreement between ground water irrigators and the Surface Water Coalition.

Based on field inspections and direct communication with the well owners, Department officials estimate that most of the approximately 5,500 affected ground water users are in full compliance now. IDWR officials and watermasters will continue to verify ground water meter installations as they work to gain full compliance on the director’s order.

In June 2017 and again in March of this year, IDWR officials sent letters to qualifying well owners reminding them of the measurement requirement. IDWR received an overwhelmingly positive response to the March 2018 reminder letter. “We appreciate that most ground water pumpers have installed flow meters, which will lead to more accurate measurement and better reporting of ground water use in the ESPA region,” Spackman said.

Under the curtailment order, watermasters will curtail ground water well use until a department-approved flow meter is installed, or until an acceptable variance or extension request is submitted to the department and approved, officials said.

The water users affected by the curtailment order are irrigators, stockwater users or domestic water users.

Water users who are on the non-compliance list are encouraged to contact their water district watermaster or IDWR officials for assistance. James Cefalo in Idaho Falls is the watermaster for Districts 100, 110 and 120; he can be reached at 208-525-7161. Nathan Erickson in Twin Falls is the watermaster for District 130; he can be reached at 208-736-3033. Brian Higgs is the watermaster for District 140; he can be reached at 208-604-1280.

IDWR officials Tim Luke, Brian Ragan and Rob Whitney can provide assistance from the state office in Boise, 208-287-4800.

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