

COMES NOW, the Petitioner A&B Irrigation District ("A&B"), by and through its undersigned counsel, and hereby files this Petition as follows:

STATEMENT OF THE CASE

1. This is a civil action pursuant to Idaho Code §§ 67-5255, 5270, and 5279 seeking judicial review of a declaratory ruling of the Respondent Idaho Department of Water Resources issued on May 26, 2008.

2. A&B petitions this Court for an order finding that the Respondent erred as a matter of law in determining that the 1951 Ground Water Act applies to A&B's senior decreed ground water right number 36-2080 with a priority date of September 9, 1948.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

3. This petition is authorized by Idaho Code §§ 67-5255, 5270, and 5279.

4. This Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to Idaho Code §§ 42-1401D and 67-5272.

5. Venue lies in this Court pursuant to Idaho Code §§ 42-1701D and 67-5272. A&B's principal place of business is located in Minidoka County and the real property (water right number 36-2080) which was the subject matter of the agency action is appurtenant to lands located in Minidoka and Jerome counties.

6. The Respondent's May 26, 2008 declaratory ruling is a final agency action subject to judicial review pursuant to Idaho Code §§ 67-5255(3) and 67-5270(2).

PARTIES

7. Petitioner A&B is an Idaho irrigation district, with its principal office located in Minidoka County, specifically Rupert, Idaho.

8. Respondent Idaho Department of Water Resources is a state agency with its main office located at 322 E. Front St., Boise, Idaho.

AGENCY RECORD

9. Judicial review is sought of the Respondent's May 26, 2008 *Order Regarding Motion for Declaratory Ruling*.

10. The Respondent held oral argument on A&B's *Motion for Declaratory Ruling* on May 2, 2008, which was recorded and a transcript created, which transcript should be made a part of the agency record in this matter. The person who may have a copy of such transcript is Victoria Wigle, Director's Administrative Assistant, Idaho Department of Water Resources, 322 E. Front St., P.O. Box 83720, Boise, Idaho 83720-0098, Telephone: (208) 287-4803, Facsimile: (208) 287-6700, email: victoria.wigle@idwr.idaho.gov. A&B will pay the necessary fee for preparation of the transcript at the time the agency record is prepared in this matter.

11. Petitioner anticipates that it can reach a stipulation regarding the agency record with the Respondent, and will pay the necessary fee for preparation of the record at such time.

12. Service of this Petition for Judicial Review of Agency Action has been made on the Respondent at the time of the filing of this Petition.

STANDARD OF REVIEW

13. The agency's erroneous conclusions of law may be corrected on appeal. *Homestead Farms v. Teton County Board of Commr's*, 141 Idaho 855, 859 (2005); *Greenfield Village Apartments v. Ada County*, 130 Idaho 207, 209 (1997); *St. Joseph Regional Med. Ctr. v. Nez Perce County Comm'rs*, 134 Idaho 486, 488 (2000). Such review on questions of law is de novo.

BACKGROUND

14. A&B Irrigation District is the beneficial owner of water right 36-2080 which entitles A&B to divert 1100 cfs of groundwater from the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (“ESPA”) through 177 wells and pumps throughout portions of Minidoka and Jerome Counties for the irrigation of 62,604.3 acres within the irrigation district. Water right 36-2080 was decreed by the Snake River Basin Adjudication (SRBA) District Court on May 7, 2003. The water right has a priority date of September 9, 1948.

15. On July 27, 1994, A&B filed a *Petition for Delivery Call* with the Idaho Department of Water Resources, seeking priority administration of its senior ground water right 36-2080. Following the pre-hearing conference, on May 1, 1995, the Department issued a *Pre-Hearing Conference Order* on May 1, 1995. The proceeding was stayed by that order. On March 16, 2007, A&B filed a *Motion to Proceed* with its water delivery call before the Department. A&B requested the Department to lift the stay previously entered and to proceed with priority administration to distribute water to A&B’s senior water right 36-2080.

16. After the Department and Director failed to take any action on A&B’s *Motion to Proceed*, A&B filed a *Petition for Peremptory Writ of Mandate* in district court on August 23, 2007 (A&B Irrigation District v. Tuthill et al., Case No. CV-2007-665, Fifth Jud. Dist., Minidoka County). Thereafter, the Director lifted the stay, set a hearing schedule, and appointed a hearing officer (Justice Gerald F. Schroeder) to preside over the matter on October 19, 2007. The District Court followed up with a *Memorandum Decision re: Respondent’s Motion to Dismiss* on October 29, 2007, whereby the Court denied the Respondent’s motion to dismiss and granted A&B’s request for a preemptive writ of mandate. The Court ordered the Director to

make a determination of material injury on or before January 15, 2008, which deadline was later extended to January 29, 2008.

17. On January 29, 2008 the Director issued an *Order* responding to A&B's water right delivery call. A&B then filed a petition challenging and requesting a hearing on that order on February 13, 2008. By agreement amongst the parties, the hearing on A&B's petition is scheduled for December 3 – 17, 2008.

18. On March 21, 2008 A&B filed a *Motion for Declaratory Ruling* pursuant to Rules 260 and 565 of the Department's Rules of Procedure (IDAPA 37.01.01 *et seq.*) seeking an order establishing the applicable law to A&B's Petition for a Delivery Call of ground water pursuant to its decreed water right number 36-2080, and the administration of that right. The Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, Inc. and the City of Pocatello filed responses to that motion on April 11 and April 14, 2008 and A&B then filed a reply brief on April 25, 2008. Oral argument on A&B's motion was held on May 2, 2008.

19. On May 26, 2008 the Hearing Officer issued an *Order Regarding Motion for Declaratory Ruling*. Pursuant to Idaho Code § 67-5255(2) and Rule 402 of the Department's Rules of Procedure, the *Order* is a final agency action subject to judicial review. Pursuant to Rule 51 of the Department's Rules of Procedure, the definition of the "agency" includes the Hearing Officer.

FIRST CLAIM FOR RELIEF

(Respondent's Order is Erroneous as a Matter of Law)

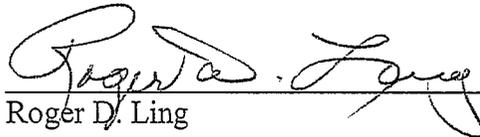
20. A&B repeats the allegations of paragraphs 1-19, inclusive, as if set forth fully herein.

21. Respondent's Order of May 26, 2008, concluding that the 1951 Ground Water Act, Idaho Code § 42-226 *et seq.*, applies to A&B's decreed ground water right number 36-2080 with a priority date of September 9, 1948 is erroneous as a matter of law.

WHEREFORE, A&B prays that his Court:

1. Enter an order in favor of A&B and against Respondent with respect to A&B's claim;
2. Reverse Respondent's May 26, 2008 Order in whole;
3. Remand the matter to Respondent with directions to comply with the Court's order; and
4. Award such other and further relief which this Court deems just and equitable.

DATED this 20th day of June 2008.



Roger D. Ling

BARKER ROSHOLT & SIMPSON LLP



Travis L. Thompson

Attorneys for Petitioner A&B Irrigation District

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

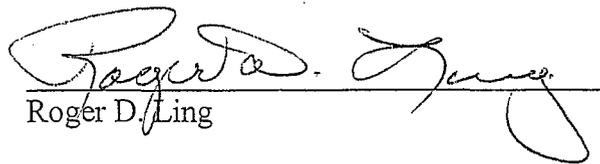
I HEREBY CERTIFY that on the 20th day of June, 2008, I served true and correct copies of the *Notice of Appeal and Petition for Judicial Review of Agency Action* by U.S. Mail, postage prepaid, upon the following:

Deputy Clerk
 Minidoka County District Court
 715 G Street
 P.O. Box 368
 Rupert, Idaho 83350-0368
 Fax: (208) 436-5272

Clive J. Strong
 Phillip J. Rassier
 Deputy Attorneys General
 Idaho Department of Water Resources
 P.O. Box 83720
 Boise, Idaho 83720-0098
clive.strong@ag.idaho.gov
phil.rassier@idwr.idaho.gov
john.homan@idwr.idaho.gov
chris.bromley@idwr.idaho.gov

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| Hon. Gerald F. Schroeder c/o Victoria Wigle IDWR P.O. Box 83720 Boise, ID 83720 victoria.wigle@idwr.idaho.gov fcjschroeder@gmail.com | Randall C. Budge Candice M. McHugh Racine Olson PO Box 1391 201 E Center Street Pocatello ID 83204-1391 rcb@racinelaw.net cmm@racinelaw.net | Sarah A. Klahn White & Jankowski LLP 511 Sixteenth Street, Suite 500 Denver, CO 80202 sarahk@white-jankowski.com |
| B.J. Driscoll McGrath Meacham Smith PLLC 414 Shoup PO Box 50731 Idaho Falls ID 83405 bjd@idaholaw.com | Steve L Stephens Butte Co Prosecuting Attorney 260 Grand Ave PO Box 736 Arco ID 83213 | Fred & Phyllis Stewart 300 Sugar Leo Road St George UT 84790 |
| Michael Patterson, President Desert Ridge Farms Inc. PO Box 185 Paul ID 83347 | City of Firth PO Box 37 Firth ID 83236 | Todd Lowder 2607 W 1200 S Sterling ID 83210 |
| Neil and Julie Morgan 762 W Hwy 39 Blackfoot ID 83221 | Charlene Patterson Patterson Farms of Idaho 277 N 725 Lane W Paul ID 83347 | William A. Parsons Parsons Smith Stone LLP 137 West 13 th St PO Box 910 Burley ID 83318 wparsons@pmt.org |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| A. Dean Tranmer City of Pocatello PO Box 4169 Pocatello ID 83201 dtranmer@pocatello.us | Winding Brook Corp c/o Charles W Bryan Jr UBS Agrivest LLC PO Box 53 Nampa ID 83653 | James C. Tucker Idaho Power Company 1221 West Idaho Street Boise, ID 83702-5627 jtucker2@idahopower.com |
| Lary S Larson Hopkins Roden Crockett Hansen & Hoopes PO Box 51219 Idaho Falls ID 83405-1219 | Jo Beeman, Esq. Beeman & Associates 409 W Jefferson Boise ID 83702 jo.beeman@beemanlaw.com | City of Basalt PO Box 178 Basalt ID 83218 |
| M. Jay Meyers Myers Law Office PO Box 4747 Pocatello ID 83205 | City of Castleford P.O. Box 626 300 Main Castleford, ID 83321 | LaDell and Sherry Anderson 304 N 500 W Paul ID 83347 |
| Denise Glore, Attorney Office of Chief Counsel US Dept of Energy 1955 Fremont Ave MS 1209 Idaho Falls ID 83415-1510 gloredm@id.doe.gov | Mary Ann Plant 480 N 150 W Blackfoot ID 83221 | Jerry R. Rigby Rigby Andrus and Moeller 25 N 2 nd East Rexburg ID 83440 jrigby@rex-law.com |
| Jeff Feld 719 Bitterroot Dr Pocatello ID 83201 | O.E. Feld & Berneta Feld 1470 S 2750 W Aberdeen ID 83210 | Eugene Hruza PO Box 66 Minidoka ID 83343 |
| Robert E. Williams Fredericksen Williams Meservy & Lothspeich LLP PO Box 168 Jerome ID 83338 rewilliams@cableone.net | Gregory P. Meacham McGrath Meacham & Smith PLLC 414 Shoup Idaho Falls ID 83405 | James S. Lochhead Michael A. Gheleta Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck P.C. 410 Seventeenth Str., Ste 2200 Denver, CO 80202 jlochhead@bhfs.com mgheleta@bhfs.com |
| Richard J. Kimmel 867 N. 800 East Shelley, ID 83274 | F. Randall Kline P.O. Box 397 427 N. Main St. Pocatello, ID 83204 | |


 Roger D. Ling