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DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES

Gary Spackman
Director
Idaho Department of Water Resources
322 East Front Street
Boise, ID 83720-0098

Dear Director Spackman:

The USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) filed a Petition to Intervene in the matter of designating a Critical Ground Water Area or a Ground Water Management Area in the Big Lost River Basin, Docket No. P-CGWA-2016-001. On June 5, 2017 you granted that Motion. In your May 9th Order Authorizing Discovery and Scheduling Order you requested parties submit position statements by June 14, 2017. This is our response to that Order.

The Forest Service has an interest in this matter because we have over 1,200 decreed water rights in the Big Lost River drainage. The majority of these are for small domestic or stockwater uses. We also have five Federal Reserved water rights for administrative sites for domestic purposes. We wish to participate in the hearings to assist in identifying any potential injury to existing Forest Service water rights and to participate in discussions related to any mitigation measures that are developed through settlement which would impact Forest Service water rights. We do not intend at this time to call witnesses or participate in discovery.

We recognize that this is a very important issue for the citizens in the Lost River. We hope the issue can remain focused on irrigation water on irrigated lands in the main Lost River Valley. To the extent possible we encourage a solution that would limit the need for the United States to be involved in the designation that primarily affects irrigation practices of farmers, ranchers and others in the irrigation community.

If you have any questions please contact Jamie Gough, Water Rights and Uses Program Manager at 801-625-5809, jgough@fs.fed.us, or Steve Spencer, Idaho Water Rights Coordinator at 208-365-7055, sspencer@fs.fed.us.

Sincerely,

KATHRYN J. CONANT
Director Lands and Minerals

