



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES

NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Little recommends proactive solutions to the Idaho Water Resource Board to give Swan Falls trust water users a reprieve for the 2026 irrigation season

BOISE – (July 9, 2026) – Snake River trust water users will get a reprieve for the 2026 irrigation season, officials said Thursday.

After Gov. Brad Little received a letter from the Idaho Power Company, indicating it would not advocate for curtailing trust water rights this summer in exchange for certain commitments from the state, the governor asked Idaho Water Resource Board Chairman Jeff Raybould to secure storage water to mitigate shortfalls to surface water flows at the Murphy gage by Swan Falls Dam this summer should any occur.

The historic Swan Falls Agreement normally would require the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) to curtail trust water users in the event that Snake River flows fell below the required minimum flow of 3,900 cubic feet per second (cfs) at the Murphy gage—something that has never occurred since the Swan Falls Settlement was made in 1984. Anticipating that this might be the first year that flows fell below 3,900 cfs, in early June, IDWR gave more than 4,000 trust water users notice that curtailment could occur if flows at the Murphy gage fell below 3,900 cfs.

So far this summer, the flow has remained above 3,900 cfs. Today's flow is 4,610 cfs.

To potentially resolve any shortfall, Gov. Little recommended that the IWRB should work to secure 5,900 acre-feet of storage water to offset the depletion of flows at the Murphy gage. He also suggested that the IWRB put together a committee of stakeholders within the Swan Falls Implementation Group to evaluate long-term solutions.

"I support Idaho Power's proposed approach, and I am grateful for their cooperative outreach," Gov. Little said in a recent letter to Chairman Raybould.

Given the intensity of the 2026 drought in the Snake River Basin and the hardships faced by Idaho farmers this year – including high input costs, poor crop prices, water shortages, and more – Gov. Little and Idaho Power officials agreed that further hardship with the potential curtailment of trust water rights due to reduced flows at Swan Falls Dam and the Murphy gage should be avoided.

Gov. Little also asked IDWR Director Mat Weaver to incorporate all trust water rights into water districts with watermasters, and to report on his schedule for doing so.

"Trust Water Rights" refer to a legal framework established by the 1984 Swan Falls Settlement in Idaho. This agreement resolved a conflict between Idaho Power Company and the State of Idaho regarding how to balance the Snake River's water use for agricultural development and other purposes against Idaho Power's use for hydroelectric generation. The rights were issued after the settlement and are subject to maintaining the required minimum flows at the Murphy gage; they may apply to the Snake River or tributary aquifers.

For background information on the Swan Falls Settlement, go to this link on the IDWR website:

<https://idwr.idaho.gov/settlements/swan-falls-settlement/>

Water users can track flows, review legal parameters, and see exact usage areas utilizing the [IDWR Swan Falls Settlement Interactive Map](#).

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