

**BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES**  
**OF THE STATE OF IDAHO**

IN THE MATTER OF A DECLARATION )	
OF DROUGHT EMERGENCY FOR )	<b>ORDER DECLARING</b>
BUTTE AND CUSTER COUNTIES )	<b>DROUGHT EMERGENCY</b>
_____ )	

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners for Butte County and the Board of County Commissioners for Custer County have separately requested that the Governor of Idaho (“Governor”) and the Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources (“Director”) declare a drought emergency for each county to allow administrative actions to lessen the impacts of drought conditions in each county; and

WHEREAS, Butte County is included within the Big Lost and Little Lost River drainages, and Custer County is included within the Big Lost, Little Lost and Salmon River drainages; and

WHEREAS, Butte and Custer Counties are experiencing limited drought conditions due to below median snowpack levels and precipitation. Specifically, total cumulative snow water equivalent (SWE) levels in the Big Lost, Little Lost, and Salmon River basins through April were 78 percent, 70 percent, and 102 percent of median, respectively; and

WHEREAS, water year to date precipitation levels in the Big Lost, Little Lost, and Salmon River basins through April were 90 percent, 82 percent, and 101 percent of median, respectively; and

WHEREAS, May through July stream flow volume forecasts for the Big Lost River below Mackay Reservoir, the Little Lost River near Howe, and the Salmon River at Salmon are estimated to be 81 percent, 72 percent, and 90 percent of median, respectively; and

WHEREAS, the United States Drought Monitor Index on May 8, 2025, showed the westernmost portion of Custer County is not in drought conditions, however the remaining portions of Butte County and Custer County are classified as being in abnormally dry to moderate drought; and

WHEREAS, section 42-222A, Idaho Code, provides that upon declaration of a drought emergency for an area designated by the Director and approved by the Governor, the Director is authorized to allow temporary changes in the point of diversion, the place of use, and the purpose of use for valid existing water rights and temporary exchanges of water rights when the Director determines that such changes can be accomplished in accordance with the provisions of section

42-222A, Idaho Code; and

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that pursuant to the authority of the Director provided in section 42-222A, Idaho Code, a drought emergency for purposes of section 42-222A, Idaho Code, is hereby declared for Butte County and Custer County, Idaho.

IT IS FURTHER HEREBY ORDERED that pursuant to this declared drought emergency and the provisions of section 42-222A, Idaho Code, the following procedures and requirements shall apply to the filing, processing, and approval of any application for a temporary change to an existing water right within Butte County and Custer County during the pendency of this declared drought emergency:

1. An application for a temporary change to an existing water right shall be made upon forms provided by the department and shall be accompanied by an application fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00) per application.
2. The Director is not required to publish notice of the proposed change pursuant to the provisions of section 42-211, 42-222(1) or 42-240, Idaho Code, and is not required to make findings as provided in said sections. A temporary change may be approved upon completion of the application form, payment of the filing fee, and a determination by the Director that the proposed change can be properly administered and there is no information that the change will injure any other water right. If the right to be changed is administered by a watermaster within a water district, the Director shall obtain and consider the recommendations of the watermaster before approving the temporary change application.
3. All temporary changes approved pursuant to the provisions of this order shall expire on the date shown in the approval which shall not be later than December 31, 2025, and thereafter, the water right shall revert to the point of diversion and place of use existing prior to the temporary change. Nothing herein shall be construed as approval to authorize construction of a new well as a new point of diversion or to alter a stream channel.
4. The recipient of an approved temporary change issued pursuant to this order shall assume all risk of curtailment or mitigation should the diversion and use of water under the temporary change cause injury to other water rights or result in an enlargement in use of the original right.
5. Temporary changes shall only be approved for the purpose of providing a replacement water supply to lands or other uses that normally have a full water supply, except for the drought conditions. Temporary changes may not be approved to provide water for new development or to allow expansion of the use of water under existing water rights. If the right to use water is represented by shares of stock in a corporation, or if the diversion works or delivery system for such right is owned or managed by an irrigation district, no change in point of diversion, place or nature of use of such water shall be made or allowed without

the written consent of such corporation or irrigation district.

6. Any applicant for a temporary change who is aggrieved by a denial of the Director for a temporary change pursuant to this order and the provisions of section 42-222A, Idaho Code, may request a hearing pursuant to section 42-1701A(3), Idaho Code, and may seek judicial review of the final order of the Director pursuant to the provisions of section 42-1701A(4), Idaho Code.

IT IS FURTHER HEREBY ORDERED that this order is effective upon the approval of the Governor and expires on December 31, 2025, unless extended or terminated by order of the Director.

DATED this 19<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2025.



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Mat Weaver  
Director

APPROVED this 20<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2025.



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Brad Little  
Governor