

## MEMO

**TO:** Governor Little  
Director Weaver

**FROM:** James Cefalo, <sup>JC</sup> Facilitator for the ESPA GWMA Advisory Committee

**DATE:** August 30, 2024

**RE:** Summary of the ESPA GWMA Advisory Committee Process

The Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) Ground Water Management Area (GWMA) Advisory Committee was formed in August 2023 to assist the Director of the Department of Water Resources (Department) in drafting a management plan for the ESPA GWMA. Even though the Department is not required by statute to form an advisory committee, the Department has often formed advisory committees in GWMA basins to solicit input from the water user community before adopting a management plan. The primary task of the ESPA GWMA Advisory Committee was to prepare a draft management plan for consideration by the Director. Initially, the Director asked the committee to submit a draft plan by December 31, 2024. In recent months, that deadline was moved to September 1, 2024.

Over the last year, the full committee met twelve times. In addition to the committee meetings, I conducted multiple breakout sessions with ground water users and surface water users and have had many discussions with committee members outside of the meetings. I am grateful for the dedication of the committee members and want to acknowledge the countless hours they have sacrificed to serve on the committee. Many of the committee members participated in the committee process in good faith, sincerely trying to find practical solutions for the management of the ESPA.

The committee was unable to reach consensus on the key provisions of a management plan. That does not mean, however, that the committee process was unsuccessful. I believe the committee process was valuable and effective. The committee identified and discussed many of the primary elements that must be included in a management plan for the ESPA.

To help you understand the topics that have been discussed by the committee over the last year, committee members have asked me to provide you a copy of the following documents:

1. Ground Water Users' Aquifer Stabilization Framework (12/5/2023).
2. Surface Water Users' Framework, Executive Summary and Attachments (1/25/2024).
3. Cities' Framework and Presentation (2/7/2024).
4. Ground Water Users' Management Plan and Cover Letter (8/27/2024).
5. Cities' Letter to Director Weaver and Attachments (8/27/2024).

6. Surface Water Users' ESPA GWMA Plan (8/28/2024).
7. ESPA Water Budget – presented by Jennifer Sukow in November 2023.
8. ESPA Storage Changes – presented by Mike McVay in January 2024.

In my role as facilitator, I have decided to not make any recommendations about the substance of the management plan. The documents provided by advisory committee groups sufficiently outline the topics discussed by the committee. I will, however, provide a recommendation about the advisory committee. If the plan calls for the formation of a permanent advisory committee for the ESPA GWMA, I recommend that the majority of committee members be representatives for water users who will be regulated by the plan. This will help the committee focus its efforts on the day-to-day management of the aquifer, which is the primary purpose of a management plan.

Thank you for asking me to serve as a facilitator for the advisory committee process. I am encouraged by the work of the advisory committee over the last year and the tone of the discussions. Even though there are still disagreements about the best way to manage the ESPA, all the committee members agree that the ESPA is the foundation of the state's economy and want to ensure that this valuable resource is available to benefit our current citizens and future generations.

