

BEFORE THE IDAHO WATER RESOURCE BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF MANAGEMENT OF THE
EASTERN SNAKE PLAIN AQUIFER

RESOLUTION TO EXPRESS IWRB SUPPORT
FOR THE 2024 STIPULATED MITIGATION PLAN
AND COMMITMENT TO EASTERN SNAKE
PLAIN AQUIFER PROJECTS

1 WHEREAS, the Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) is responsible for the conservation,
2 development, management, and optimum use of Idaho’s water resources, including the Eastern Snake
3 Plain Aquifer (ESPA); and
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5 WHEREAS, the Idaho Constitution, Article XV, Section 7, establishes that the IWRB shall have the
6 duty of formulating and implementing a state water policy, developing, and conserving Idaho’s water
7 resources, and that the legislature shall provide funding mechanisms to further these objectives; and
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9 WHEREAS, the ESPA is a critical water source, supplying groundwater to approximately one
10 million acres of irrigated farmland, municipalities, businesses, and industries across southern and eastern
11 Idaho; and
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13 WHEREAS, the ESPA is hydraulically connected to the Snake River, contributing to surface water
14 supplies for approximately 600,000 acres in the Magic Valley, as well as supporting aquaculture,
15 downstream hydropower generation, and other beneficial uses; and
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17 WHEREAS, since 1952, the volume of groundwater stored in the ESPA has declined due to changes
18 in irrigation practices, groundwater development, and other factors, resulting in reduced spring flows,
19 diminished surface water supplies, and increased water conflicts; and
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21 WHEREAS, the State of Idaho has previously committed to addressing these challenges through
22 legislative measures, including Senate Concurrent Resolutions 136 and 138 in 2016, which established a
23 managed recharge goal of 250,000 acre-feet annually and endorsed agreements between surface and
24 groundwater users to sustain water resources; and
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26 WHEREAS, the 2024 Stipulated Mitigation Plan, executed on November 15, 2024, between the
27 Surface Water Coalition and participating Groundwater Districts, supersedes prior agreements and
28 continues groundwater conservation, managed aquifer recharge, and mitigation activities; and
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30 WHEREAS, the IWRB recognizes the necessity of additional investments in water infrastructure
31 and managed aquifer recharge projects to achieve a revised ESPA managed recharge goal of 350,000 acre-
32 feet annually, as outlined in proposed updates to the State Water Plan through Senate Concurrent
33 Resolution 110; and
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35 WHEREAS, in accordance with Idaho Code § 42-1760, expenditures from the water management
36 account shall support projects that contribute to the long-term stability of Idaho’s water resources,
37 including but not limited to:

- 38 1. The construction of a raise of Anderson Ranch Dam on the South Fork of the Boise River;
- 39 2. The Mountain Home Air Force Base water delivery and treatment systems; and

40 3. The identification, study, construction, and expansion of managed aquifer recharge sites,
41 groundwater-to-surface water conversion projects, and water measurement infrastructure above
42 Milner Dam, based on scientific data and technical analysis to enhance the ESPA and fulfill Idaho's
43 commitments under legislative resolutions.

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45 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Idaho Water Resource Board formally expresses its
46 support for the 2024 Stipulated Mitigation Plan and commits to identifying and advancing projects that
47 reinforce the objectives of the agreement; and

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49 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the IWRB will prioritize the implementation of
50 projects that restore the ESPA, improve Snake River reach gains between Blackfoot and the Minidoka
51 Dam, and sustain Idaho's water users while minimizing economic harm; and

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53 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that when selecting and implementing projects, the
54 IWRB shall consider the impacts on existing water rights, water quality, economic stability, drought
55 resiliency, and overall water sustainability for the benefit of the state's citizens; and

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57 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the IWRB will seek public input in the selection
58 and implementation of projects and will work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure the continued
59 viability of Idaho's water resources.

DATED this 11th day of March 2025.



JEFF RAYBOULD, Chairman
Idaho Water Resource Board

ATTEST 

DEAN STEVENSON, Secretary