Rebuttal to the Inclusion of the Big Lost River Drainage in the Eastern Idaho Snake Plain Mitigation Area

Introduction

This document serves as a rebuttal to the proposed inclusion of the Big Lost River drainage in the Eastern Idaho Snake Plain mitigation area. After careful review of the presentation made during the hearing, we believe the decision is being advanced without sufficient data, context, or a clear plan for implementation. The information provided was lacking in key hydrological details and did not adequately account for the historical, geographical, and environmental factors that define the Big Lost River system.

Lack of a Clear Timeline

The presentation failed to provide a concrete timeline for implementation or next steps. Without a defined schedule or framework for execution, it is premature to move forward with any decisions affecting the Big Lost River basin. Planning efforts of this magnitude require transparency, structure, and accountability—all of which were missing from the presentation.

Absence of Historical Context and Scientific Data

The hearing presentation lacked essential historical context regarding water flow, land use, and drought patterns specific to the Big Lost River drainage. Additionally, the decision appears to be based on the requirement of merely having a hearing and not upheld by facts sufficient to meet the purpose and standard of a public hearing. Without reliable scientific backing any action taken would be speculative at best.

Unique Hydrological Characteristics

Unlike other regions within the Snake Plain, the Big Lost River drainage has unique geographical and hydrological traits. Water from this area does not flow above ground to the Snake River but instead seeps into the ground, which may or may not eventually reach the aquifer deep beneath the surface. This underground travel can take hundreds of years. According to hydrologist Ackerman's report, water from the Big Lost River may take up to 250 years to reach areas such as the Idaho National Engineering Laboratory (INEL).

Snowpack Dependency and Drought Impact

The Big Lost River is heavily influenced by snowpack levels above the Mackay Reservoir, which dictates both surface and subsurface water flow. The region experiences localized drought

conditions that are not comparable to those in the broader Snake Plain. These differences must be acknowledged in any water management or mitigation strategy.

Conclusion

Due to the lack of a clear timeline, insufficient historical and scientific data, and the distinct hydrological nature of the Big Lost River drainage, we respectfully request that it not be included in the Eastern Idaho Snake Plain mitigation area at this time. We urge a delay in any decision-making until a more comprehensive evaluation—grounded in factual and scientific evidence—is conducted. If this plan is implemented as proposed it will cause undo financial hardship and cause many farmers and ranchers to lose their land and their homes. Director, please consider these things very carefully.

Thank you very much

Loy Pehrson

3624 W 3700 N

Darlington ID 83255