

Robert C. McClymonds, II
P O Box 1096
Portola, Ca 96122

Idaho Department of Water Resources
P O Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0098

Re: Big Lost River Basin inclusion into Snake River Ground Water Supply

Dear Sirs,

Last year my wife Katherine and I purchased a small farm located at 2279 N 3375 W, Moore, Idaho which included both surface and ground water rights. I attended both meetings on March 3 & 24, 2025 at the Community Center in Moore, Idaho. At the meeting on the 24th, I choose not to speak up, one - because I was new to the area, and two – because I have found that you learn a lot by listening. The impression that I got was that a decision has already been made by IDWR and that the meeting was just a formality. I hope this was not the case. For the record, my wife and I are opposed to the inclusion of the Big Lost River Drainage Basin being included into the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer Area of Common Ground Water Supply.

I would like to note that just because we are new to the area, does not mean we are unfamiliar with how things work in local water districts or with governing state agencies. Besides having a degree in Physical Geography, I have been dealing with the A & B Irrigation District for over Forty years taking care of my parents Homestead Farm, I'm familiar with the Newlands Water District near Fallon, Nv; my grandparents were part of the homesteaders in the Tulelake, Ca/Klamath Falls , Or area, who constructed a dam to provide and manage the local water sources to provide adequate water to all of the farms; and I am familiar with what Southern California did to Owens Valley. I am the grandson and son of Farmers.

I find it disturbing and wrong that the boundary lines for the ESPA ACGW were redrawn in the Spring of 2024 without notifying anyone in the affected areas that were included. At the March 24, 2025 meeting there was notable concern that this had been done without consulting with the water right holders affected. The area affected is, the valley area from Arco, Idaho to the dam at Mackay, Idaho.

The question came up at the March 24, 2025 meeting regarding what proof did the IDWR have that the aquifer in the Big Lost River Basin actually contributed to either the aquifer heading towards the Twin Falls area or the aquifer heading towards Blackfoot, Idaho. When this question was asked, even the State Hydrologist present did not know, and there was no definitive proof. A former area Water Master told of a radioactive indicator dye being placed into the Big Lost River ground water to see where it reappeared and this was done sometime in the 1970's. No trace has been found yet and this happened fifty years ago.

There was a local farmer who is also a Civil Engineer, who pointed out that historically any water flowing down the Big Lost River and Little Lost River ends up in a catch basin lake currently called Mud Lake. He also emphasized the appearance of an ancient mountain range which would block water flowing towards the Snake River which has been silted in over the years making it hidden today. And at no time in the past five hundred years has the Snake River ever changed its course and come anywhere near the Big Lost River Basin or the Little Lost River Basin.

There is another point I would like to point out. What assurances do the water right holders have that if, IDWR has sole determination over water allocations, that it can bypass the water right holders' interests. I make note of two such possibilities that have come up in my research that would devastate the crop producing in the area. The first is the Cobalt Mines located near Salmon, Idaho, run by an Australian company. I realize that Cobalt is a vital mineral to our Defense Department, but the mining of it requires an enormous amount of water. Also, why has there been increased scanning by helicopters with geological equipment in the Blackfoot, Idaho Falls and the area north to Montana? The second is the Meta Data Center in Kuna, Idaho, which will require, I believe, millions of gallons of water daily to cool their electronic equipment.

I see what our local water district is doing. I see how the local Farmers and Ranchers feel about the good work that is being done. I see the measures currently underway with pipelines supplying water to limit waste. If this consolidation happens, it will penalize all the Tributary Basins by restricting their water if there is a shortage in the Magic Valley area either by nature or by the mismanagement of other entities. If our area has a shortage due to rainfall, I see no proposal for the rest of the ESPA ACGW to make adjustments.

I know water management and protection is important. I'm sure that on years where there is an abundance, measures can be taken to help replenish the aquifers regardless of where they may flow by the simple task of reverse pumping. The proposal that you have suggested may be good in theory, but in practice it is a bad idea that has no concrete proof of where the source of the aquifers water comes. Therefore, I would strongly suggest that this proposal does not move forward, but to continue looking for valid solutions and involve the local entities for input.

Respectfully,

Robert C McClymonds, II

Cc: KAM,SEM