



Governor Brad Little

Director Mathew Weaver

November 25, 2025

**Re: Expansion of the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer Area of Common Ground Water Supply –
Portneuf Tributary Basin**

Water User,

On March 7, 2025, the Department published the *Notice of Proposed Action, Public Hearing and Written Comment Period* (“Notice”) for the matter of including the Portneuf tributary basin into the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer (ESPA) area of common ground water supply (ACGWS). The Notice was sent to all current owners of non-exempt ground water rights that have an authorized point of diversion within the Portneuf tributary basin.

On March 26, 2025, the Department conducted a public hearing regarding the proposed action.

Public comments were recorded at the hearing, and written comments were accepted until April 7, 2025. Written comments, audio, and a transcript from the hearing can be found at <https://idwr.idaho.gov/legal-actions/administrative-actions/espa-acgws-portneuf/>.

Both written and oral public comment expressed concerns regarding the connectivity between the Portneuf basin and the ESPA. This concern was followed by a request for additional studies and data collection before deciding whether to expand the area of common ground water supply of the ESPA to include the Portneuf basin.

After consideration, the Department will not expand the ESPA ACGWS to include the Portneuf basin at this time. In 2023, the Department and the Idaho Water Resource Board initiated the Portneuf River Basin Hydrologic Investigation. This investigation includes developing a conceptual hydrogeologic framework, developing a ground water budget, conducting ground water level mass measurements, installing stream gages, and performing a multi-year seepage study to examine surface water-ground water interactions. I will postpone a decision while the Department continues its current investigation, which should provide information that may help in evaluating the extent of basin connectivity.

Respectfully,

Mathew Weaver
Director

Enclosed: ESPA Tributary Basins Map – Portneuf

