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North Side Canal Company, and Twin Falls  
Canal Company*

RECEIVED  
FEB 02 2024  
DEPT OF WATER RESOURCES  
SOUTHERN REGION

**BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES  
OF THE STATE OF IDAHO**

IN THE MATTER OF BINGHAM GROUND  
WATER DISTRICT'S MITIGATION PLAN  
FOR THE SURFACE WATER COALITION

2024-001  
Docket No.: CM-MP-2023-            
~~Docket No.: CM-DC-2010-001~~

**SURFACE WATER COALITION'S  
JOINT PROTEST**

IN THE MATTER OF THE DISTRIBUTION  
OF WATER TO VARIOUS WATER  
RIGHTS HELD BY AND FOR THE  
BENEFIT OF A&B IRRIGATION  
DISTRICT, AMERICAN FALLS  
RESERVOIR DISTRICT #2, BURLEY  
IRRIGATION DISTRICT, MILNER  
IRRIGATION DISTRICT, MINIDOKA  
IRRIGATION DISTRICT, NORTH SIDE  
CANAL COMPANY, AND TWIN FALLS  
CANAL COMPANY

COME NOW, A&B IRRIGATION DISTRICT, AMERICAN FALLS RESERVOIR  
DISTRICT #2, BURLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT, MILNER IRRIGATION DISTRICT,  
MINIDOKA IRRIGATION DISTRICT, NORTH SIDE CANAL COMPANY and TWIN FALLS  
CANAL COMPANY (hereinafter referred to as the "Coalition" or "SWC"), by and through their

attorneys of record, Marten Law LLP and Fletcher Law Office, and hereby file this *Joint Protest* to the approval of the *Petition for Approval of Bingham Ground Water District's Mitigation Plan for the Surface Water Coalition* ("Mitigation Plan"), filed with the Idaho Department of Water Resources ("Department") on January 2, 2024 by BINGHAM GROUND WATER DISTRICT ("Bingham") pursuant to the provisions of Conjunctive Management Rule 43, IDWR Procedural Rule 250, and other applicable law.

The SWC is authorized to oppose the Mitigation Plan because the Plan attempts to mitigate injury to the SWC's senior surface water rights caused by Bingham's members' junior priority ground water rights. The initial bases for SWC's *Protest* are as follows:

1. The proposed Mitigation Plan does not comply with the *2016 Stipulated Mitigation Plan* (March 9, 2016), as amended (February 7, 2017), and as approved by final orders of the Director (May 2, 2016 and May 9, 2017) (CM-MP-2016-001). *See Surface Water Coalition's and IGWA's Stipulated Mitigation Plan and Request for Order, Surface Water Coalition's and IGWA's Stipulated Amended Mitigation Plan and Request for Order, Final Order Approving Stipulated Mitigation Plan, Final Order Approving Amendment to Stipulated Mitigation.*

2. The Mitigation Plan does not identify, with particularity, the water rights of Bingham's members proposed to benefit from the Mitigation Plan.

3. The Mitigation Plan does not identify, with particularity, circumstances, or limitations on the availability of the water supply proposed to be used for mitigation or the effect that the proposed water use reductions will practically have on the SWC.

4. To the best of SWC's knowledge, Bingham does not hold the right to use any storage water in the Upper Snake Reservoir System. Accordingly, Bingham does not have any available storage to provide to SWC for direct mitigation in any given year, including 2024.

5. Bingham's proposed activities, including reduced pumping, recharge, and reduction

of irrigated acres are not defined with particularity, including location, water rights involved, and the estimated benefits that might accrue from the projects.

6. The Mitigation Plan does not identify that it will provide replacement water, at the time and place required by SWC's senior priority surface water rights, sufficient to offset the depletive effect of Bingham's ground water withdrawals on the Snake River at such time and place necessary to satisfy SWC's senior priority water rights.

7. The Mitigation Plan does not adequately identify "contingency provisions to assure protection of the senior-priority right in the event the mitigation water source becomes unavailable" and therefore violates CM Rule 43.03.c.

8. The Mitigation Plan does not identify how injury to SWC's right to reasonable carryover storage will be addressed.

9. In general, the Mitigation Plan is vague and ambiguous, does not provide for adequate mitigation, furnishes no certainty that the mitigation water will be delivered to prevent injury, does not supply a reliable source of replacement water, could result in diversion and use of ground water at a rate beyond the reasonably anticipated average rate of future natural recharge, and otherwise fails to adequately mitigate for injury caused by Bingham's members' junior priority ground water rights.

10. For such other and further reasons as may be discovered.

DATED this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of February, 2024.

**MARTEN LAW LLP**

**FLETCHER LAW OFFICE**

*/s/ Travis L. Thompson* \_\_\_\_\_

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*/s/ W. Kent Fletcher* \_\_\_\_\_

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*Attorney for American Falls Reservoir  
District #2 & Minidoka Irrigation District*

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I hereby certify that on this 2<sup>nd</sup> day of February, 2024, I served a copy of the foregoing

NOTICE OF PROTEST, by hand-delivery to the following:

Idaho Department of Water Resources  
Southern Region  
650 Addison Ave W, Ste 500  
Twin Falls, Idaho 83301-5858

Via Email to:

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*/s/ Travis L. Thompson*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Travis L. Thompson

<p><b>Received by</b> SG <b>Receipt amt.</b> \$300.00 (total) <b>Receipt No.</b> S040078 <b>Date</b> 2-1-2024</p>
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