



State of Idaho

DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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This Guidance Document is not new law but is an agency interpretation of existing law. For more information or to provide input on the document, please contact the Groundwater Protection Manager at 208-287-4800. (Feb. 2020)

Mark

CECIL D. ANDRUS

GOVERNOR

R. KEITH HIGGINSON

DIRECTOR

ADMINISTRATOR'S MEMORANDUM

TO: Regional Offices
Resource Protection Bureau

DATE: April 29, 1991

FROM: Norman C. Young *NY*

RE: LOW TEMPERATURE GEOTHERMAL WELLS Miscellaneous Memo: #8

The Department has the responsibility of managing the low temperature geothermal water so that it is utilized primarily for its heat value. Exemptions for a use of low temperature geothermal water, for a purpose that does not utilize the heat, may be granted.

There are three reasons for granting an exemption:

- 1) there is no feasible alternative use of the resource,
- 2) there is no economically viable alternative source of cold water,
- 3) the exemption is in the public interest,

The exemptions should be requested using the attached form with the final action on the request made by the Division Administrator.

A bond is also required for drilling, re-drilling, modifying or deepening any low temperature geothermal well. The bond is necessary to insure that funds are available to repair a well that was drilled in a faulty manner or that encounters high pressure. The bonds are to remain in effect for one year or until released in writing by the director. There are areas where low temperature geothermal water occurs due to the depth of the wells, with the temperature increasing linearly with the depth, and where there is minimal increase in pressure. The required bond may be removed immediately upon satisfactory completion of the well if no significant pressure is found. The final decision for the removal of the bond will be made by the Division Administrator.

There may be areas where the department has sufficient history of previously drilled wells that the bond requirement can be waived or removed before it is obtained. This waiver is given also by the Division Administrator.

Most requests for waivers of the use of water for a non-heat purpose and of the bond requirement, should occur when the driller files his drilling prospectus and therefore final action should be taken by the department before the drilling is begun.