

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

IN THE MATTER OF A DECLARATION)
OF DROUGHT EMERGENCY FOR)
BLAINE, LINCOLN AND GOODING)
COUNTIES)
_____)

**AMENDED ORDER DECLARING
DROUGHT EMERGENCY**

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners for Blaine County, the Board of County Commissioners for Lincoln County, and the Board of County Commissioners for Gooding County have separately requested that the Governor and the Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources declare a drought emergency for each county to allow administrative actions to lessen the severe impacts of drought conditions in each county; and

WHEREAS, Blaine County is included within the Big Wood River and Little Wood River drainages; and

WHEREAS, Lincoln and Gooding Counties are included within the Big Wood River and Little Wood River drainages, and irrigation water supplies in portions of both counties are also dependent on water supply conditions in the Upper Snake River basin; and

WHEREAS, the south-central portion of Idaho, including Blaine, Lincoln and Gooding Counties, is experiencing moderate to severe drought conditions due to below normal snowpack and precipitation levels. Specifically, total cumulative snow water equivalent levels in the Big Wood and Little Wood River basins as of April 20, 2021 were respectively 63 and 46 percent of median, while water year precipitation levels in the two respective basins as of April 20, 2021 were only 67 and 57 percent of average. Cumulative snow water equivalent levels for the Snake River Basin above American Falls as of April 20, 2021 was 84 percent of median, while water year precipitation levels are 80 percent of average; and

WHEREAS, the April through September stream flow volume forecasts for the Big Wood River and Little Wood River range from only 22 to 45 percent of average, and about 82 percent of average for the Snake River at Heise; and

WHEREAS, the Idaho National Resources Conservation Service office reports that agricultural water supply shortages may occur in the Big Wood and Little Wood basins when the Surface Water Supply Index (SWSI) values are less than 0.4 and -1.5 respectively; SWSI values reported for the Big Wood and Little Wood basins on April 1, 2021 were -2.7 and -2.2 respectively; and

WHEREAS, the United States Drought Monitor Index on April 15, 2021 showed Blaine, Lincoln and Gooding Counties included within that portion of Southern Idaho classified as moderate to extreme drought; and

WHEREAS, section 42-222A, Idaho Code, provides that upon declaration of a drought emergency for an area designated by the Director of the Department of Water Resources ("Director") and approved by the Governor, the Director is authorized to allow temporary changes in the point of diversion, the place of use, and the purpose of use for valid existing water rights and temporary exchanges of water rights when the Director determines that such changes can be accomplished in accordance with the provisions of section 42-222A, Idaho Code; and

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that pursuant to the authority of the Director provided in section 42-222A, Idaho Code, a drought emergency for purposes of section 42-222A, Idaho Code, is hereby declared for Blaine County, Gooding County and Lincoln County, Idaho.

IT IS FURTHER HEREBY ORDERED that pursuant to this declared drought emergency and the provisions of section 42-222A, Idaho Code, the following procedures and requirements shall apply to the filing, processing, and approval of any application for a temporary change to an existing water right within Blaine, Gooding and Lincoln Counties during the pendency of this declared drought emergency:


1. An application for a temporary change to an existing water right shall be made upon forms provided by the department and shall be accompanied by an application fee of fifty dollars (\$50.00) per application.
2. The Director is not required to publish notice of the proposed change pursuant to the provisions of section 42-211, 42-222(1) or 42-240, Idaho Code, and is not required to make findings as provided in said sections. A temporary change may be approved upon completion of the application form, payment of the filing fee, and a determination by the Director that the proposed change can be properly administered and there is no information that the change will injure any other water right. If the right to be changed is administered by a watermaster within a water district, the Director shall obtain and consider the recommendations of the watermaster before approving the temporary change application.
3. All temporary changes approved pursuant to the provisions of this order shall expire on the date shown in the approval which shall not be later than December 31, 2021, and thereafter, the water right shall revert to the point of diversion and place of use existing prior to the temporary change. Nothing herein shall be construed as approval to authorize construction of a new well as a new point of diversion or to alter a stream channel.
4. The recipient of an approved temporary change issued pursuant to this order shall assume all risk of curtailment or mitigation should the diversion and use of water under the temporary change cause injury to other water rights or result in an enlargement in use of the original right.
5. Temporary changes shall only be approved for the purpose of providing a replacement water supply to lands or other uses that normally have a full water supply, except for the drought condition. Temporary changes may not be

approved to provide water for new development or to allow expansion of the use of water under existing water rights. If the right to use the water is represented by shares of stock in a corporation, or if the diversion works or delivery system for such right is owned or managed by an irrigation district, no change in point of diversion, place or nature of use of such water shall be made or allowed without the written consent of such corporation or irrigation district.

6. Any applicant for a temporary change who is aggrieved by a denial of the Director for a temporary change pursuant to this order and the provisions of section 42-222A, Idaho Code, may request a hearing pursuant to section 42-1701A(3), Idaho Code, and may seek judicial review of the final order of the Director pursuant to the provisions of section 42-1701A(4), Idaho Code.

IT IS FURTHER HEREBY ORDERED that this order is effective upon approval of the Governor and expires on December 31, 2021, unless extended or terminated by order of the Director.

DATED this 9th day of June, 2021.


Gary Spackman
Director

APPROVED this 16th day of June, 2021.


Brad Little
Governor

JEFFERSON COUNTY
RESOLUTION #2021 – 33

WHEREAS, Idaho Code §31-801 grants general powers and duties, subject to the restrictions of law, to the boards of county commissioners in their respective counties; and

WHEREAS, Idaho Code §31-828 grants the board of commissioners authority “to do and perform all other acts...which may be necessary to the full discharge of the duties of the chief executive authority of the county government”; and

WHEREAS, Idaho Code §42-222A authorizes the Director of the Department of Water Resources, following the declaration of a drought emergency for an area designated by the Director and approved by the Governor, to allow temporary changes of point of diversion, place and purpose of use of valid existing water rights, so long as said changes will not injure existing water rights; and

WHEREAS, Idaho Code § 46-1011 provides that the Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners may declare a local disaster emergency, which may be continued in excess of seven days with consent of the Board of County Commissioners; and

WHEREAS, Idaho Code §46-1002(3) provides, in part, that a “disaster” includes the imminent threat of widespread or severe damage or loss of property resulting from any natural or manmade cause; and

WHEREAS, Idaho Code §46-1002(4) provides, in part, that an “emergency” includes the imminent threat of a “disaster” or condition threatening property which requires state emergency assistance to supplement local efforts to protect property or to avert or lessen the threat of “disaster”; and

WHEREAS, NRCS indicates below normal snowpack and precipitation in surrounding drainages and forecasts below normal streamflow in the Upper Snake River Basin and predicts reduction of water storage in 2021; and the National Weather Service predicts above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation for the summer of 2021; and

WHEREAS, the Board finds that the current low water levels pose an imminent threat of disaster to agriculture in Jefferson County, which constitutes an emergency as defined in Idaho Code §46-1002(4);

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that good cause having been shown the Board of County Commissioners hereby declares that a local drought emergency exists in Jefferson County and hereby consents to said declaration and orders and ratifies the same. The Board further orders that this declaration of local drought disaster emergency shall remain in effect until the end of the 2021 irrigation season, or until otherwise terminated by resolution of the Board, whichever occurs earlier.

This resolution shall be in full force and effect immediately after its passage.

Done and dated this 7th day of June, 2021.

BOARD OF JEFFERSON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS



Scott Hancock
Scott Hancock, Chairman

Shayne Young
Shayne Young, Member

Roger W. Clark
Roger Clark, Member

ATTEST:

Colleen C. Poole
Colleen C. Poole, County Clerk