



NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **IDWR Director issues Emergency Drought Declaration for all 44 Idaho counties**

BOISE – (April 14, 2026) – Mathew Weaver, Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR), issued an emergency drought declaration on Monday for all 44 of Idaho’s counties statewide.

Under Idaho Code § 42-222A, the Director of IDWR has the authority to issue an emergency drought declaration, subject to the approval of the governor. On Monday, April 13, Gov. Brad Little approved the declaration, making it effective immediately.

An emergency drought declaration provides a powerful tool for agricultural water users to cope with drought by allowing temporary water right changes for the remainder of the year. An emergency drought declaration may also help with eligibility requirements for federal drought assistance.

Upon approval of a drought emergency by Gov. Little and Director Weaver, IDWR is authorized to consider applications for temporary changes in the point of diversion, place of use, and purpose of use for valid, existing water rights and temporary exchanges of water rights, when it is determined that such changes can be accomplished without harming existing water rights.

In the April 13 order, Director Weaver indicated that Idaho experienced the second-warmest winter since 1896, March was the second warmest on record, and the state had record-low snowpack as of April 1. At the beginning of April, 54 snow course locations and 45 SNOTEL sites in the Snake River Basin reported record low Snow Water Equivalent (SWE) values.

Furthermore, the Surface Water Supply Index calculations performed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) indicate that under normal hydrology from April 1 to September 30, there is a 50 percent chance of irrigation shortages on the Boise and Snake Rivers, and that water supplies are short by 6 percent in the Owyhee Basin, 14 percent in the Big Lost Basin, 44 percent in the Oakley (Goose Creek) Basin, 53 percent in the Big Wood Basin, and 58 percent in the Salmon Falls Creek basin.

If water users are interested in filing an application for a temporary change in water right, they should follow IDWR guidelines. For more information they can contact IDWR by phone at (208) 287-4800, or visit IDWR’s [Drought Declarations web page](#).

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