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DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES

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DISTRICT COURT-SRBA
TWIN FALLS CO., IDAHO
FILED

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF THE FIFTH JUDICIAL DISTRICT OF THE
STATE OF IDAHO, IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF TWIN FALLS

In Re SRBA	)	SPECIAL MASTER'S
	)	RECOMMENDATION REGARDING
Case No. 39576	)	PREJUDICE ON MOTION TO FILE
	)	LATE CLAIM
	)	
	)	WATER RIGHT NO.: 34-2418
	)	

I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On May 23, 2007, the SRBA Court received a *Motion to File Late Notice of Claim* from John Lezamiz for water right 34-2418. A hearing on the *Motion* was held on August 23, 2007, before presiding Judge John M. Melanson. An *Order of Reference to Special Master Brigitte Bilyeu* was issued August 29, 2007.

In the *Order of Reference*, Judge Melanson ruled that both "good cause" for the untimeliness and a "meritorious position" had been demonstrated by the claimant. However, Judge Melanson asked this Special Master to take up further proceedings to determine prejudice to other parties, if any. A hearing was held on October 10, 2007. The Idaho Department of Water Resources was present and reported on the likelihood of prejudice to other parties.

II. STANDARD OF REVIEW

The SRBA Administrative Orders provide that *Motions to File a Late Notice of Claim* are to be reviewed under the criteria of I.R.C.P. 55(c) and 60(b). *SRBA Administrative Order 1 (AO1)* § 4 (d)(2)(d).

III. FINDINGS

Judge Melanson has previously determined that the claimant has shown both "good cause"

SPECIAL MASTER'S RECOMMENDATION
REGARDING PREJUDICE ON MOTION TO FILE LATE CLAIM
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and a “meritorious position.” Judge Melanson asked for findings regarding “prejudice to other parties” if the late claim is allowed. The SRBA Court places emphasis on the element of prejudice to other parties in basins where the reported “irrigation and other purposes” water rights have been litigated and decreed. The SRBA Court recently noted that a late claim on a fully decreed source potentially puts parties with rights on the same source in the position of re-litigating issues that have already been decided, or in the position of addressing new issues that should have been properly raised at the time the source of the subject claim was initially report and litigated. *Order of Reference* (Subcase No. 34-13811) (October 28, 2003)

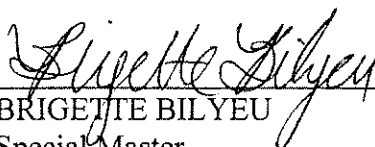
The water right at issue here is in Basin 34. Many of the “irrigation and other purposes” water rights in Basin 34 have been litigated and decreed. It is, therefore, important to determine whether allowing a late claim would prejudice existing water rights. The Idaho Department of Water Resources is very familiar with the water rights in Basin 34. IDWR reported that it has considered the potential impact of this late claim on other water rights. IDWR notified the court that water users with rights on Congdon Springs may be affected by the late claim.

IV. CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

Based on IDWR’s Report, this Special Master concludes that the likelihood of prejudice to other parties in the SRBA and in Basin 34 is such that the late claim should proceed. Although IDWR indicated there may be parties to the SRBA with rights adjudicated on Congdon Springs, IDWR was not certain whether those rights would be impacted. Furthermore, once the *Director’s Report* for this water right is filed, other parties will have an opportunity to object.

THEREFORE, IT IS RECOMMENDED that the *Motion to File Late Claim* be **granted** for water right number 34-2418.

DATED: October 15, 2007.


BRIGETTE BILYEU
Special Master
Snake River Basin Adjudication

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I certify that a true and correct copy of the SPECIAL MASTER'S RECOMENDATION REGARDING PREJUDICE ON MOTION TO FILE LATE CLAIM was mailed on October 15, 2007, with sufficient first-class postage to the following:

JOHN LEZAMIZ FAMILY

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