

Water District # 73
Ralph Hatch, Chairman
Jimmie L. Dowton, Sec.
HC 62 Box 2320
May, ID 83253
May 24, 2004

RECEIVED
JUN 01 2004
Department of Water Resources

Director Karl Dreher
Idaho Department of Water Resources
1301 N. Orchard Street
Boise, ID 83706

Re: Application for Permit 73- 11961

Dear Director Dreher,

This letter is being sent on behalf of Water District 73 in response to your decision to approve Idaho Power Company's water right application. Because the Water District is so concerned about this approval, we are asking you to reconsider the decision.

The Department is fully aware of the precarious situation this area is in with regard to water. Wells are going dry, precipitation is below normal, and overall conditions are such that there are significant potential problems for many users. The moratorium on new diversions, which has been in place for some time, reflects this situation. We do not believe the decision reflects how this basin works.

There are a number of items which we feel were not properly considered or ignored altogether. The decision indicates Idaho Power's use of water will be non consumptive. This is incorrect. Pumping of this groundwater will obviously cause a change in the timing of water leaving this basin and will affect both the aquifer and river flows. Idaho Power conducted only a short test well which is not an adequate test for the four wells to be developed under this application. The potential impacts are significant, and we feel that we are being forced to assume all the risks. We do not want to end up in a situation like in the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer. That is why there was unanimous objection by everyone in the area, including the county commissioners and our legislative representatives.

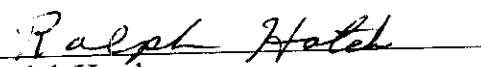
We do not understand how this can be in the local public interest. Our economy is based largely on agriculture and ranching which depend on water. Recharge is seasonal and the use of irrigation wells gives the aquifer a chance to recover. Idaho Power's use will be continuous, potentially affecting both ground water and river flows.

Almost all of your decision is focused on impacts close to the Idaho Power wells. What about the rest of the people in the basin? We are aware that it was mostly by accident that many of the members of the district even learned about this because the application was not even advertised in our local paper, The Challis Messenger. Your consideration of the application should reflect the concerns of all the people of the area.

District 73 is willing to try to work on the problems we are facing. We wanted Idaho Power to consider helping recharge the aquifer in the winter and to be prepared to respond if a water shortage occurs. We do not see that either of these were recognized in your decision.

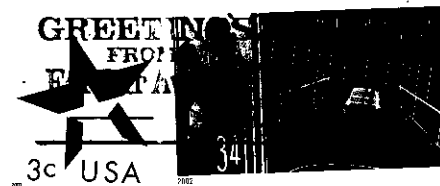
We hope this convinces you of the level of concern we have as the water district. We know many other people share these views and we hope this letter will convince you to reconsider this application.

Sincerely,


Ralph Hatch
Chairman, Water District 73


Jimmie L. Dowton
Secretary, Water District 73

WATER DISTRICT # 73
PAHSIMEROI RIVER
HC 62 BOX 2320
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