



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

STATE CAPITOL

BOISE 83720

CECIL D. ANDRUS
GOVERNOR

(208) 334-2100

September 25, 1989

C.P. Hamilton
Route 1, Box 476
Arco, ID 83213

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

Following your inquiries, Senator Symms contacted me about the water supply problems in the Big Lost River drainage.

The Department of Water Resources has received a number of complaints from water users in the Big Lost River drainage this year relative to the use of ground water, interference of surface water and ground water rights, and the general lowering of the ground water table. The department has actively met on several occasions with the water users to try to formulate a workable management approach to use of water in the valley.

The Big Lost River drainage is experiencing its third straight year of drought. Water flows and ground water levels in the area did not recover this year as did most other areas of the state from prior drought years. During extended drought conditions, the ground water table naturally drops, domestic wells which are typically shallow go dry and may need to be deepened, irrigation pumps produce less water due to the greater lift against which the pumps must work, and the area vegetation generally suffers.

The department has also actively sought to enforce water distribution laws and has ordered certain unauthorized uses to be terminated. Efforts are continuing to put together an advisory committee of local water interests to work with the department in this regard. The department met most recently with the users on August 21, 1989.

The water shortage problems in the Big Lost River drainage are, in part, directly related to the lack of a

C.P. Hamilton
September 25, 1989
Page Two

natural water supply in the basin. I encourage you to work with the state and the local water management officials to improve the management of the water resources in the unique Big Lost River Basin.

Thank you for your interest in this matter. Please feel free to contact the Department of Water Resources if you have additional questions.

With best regards,

Sincerely,

Cecil D. Andrus
Governor

CDA:abl
cc: Sen. Symms
Department of Water Resources
a/c/f [REDACTED] sw
L0925.04