



Idaho Legislative District 30

**State Representative
Julianne Young
275 N 400 W
Blackfoot, ID 83221**

**State Representative
David Cannon
75 E Judicial Street
Blackfoot, ID 83221**

**State Senator
Julie VanOrden
425 S 1100 W
Pingree, ID 832623**

May 19, 2023

Honorable Chuck Winder
Senate President Pro-Tem
5528 N Ebbetts Ave
Boise, Idaho 83713
cwinder@senate.idaho.gov

Honorable Mike Moyle
Speaker of the House
480 N Plummer Road
Star, Idaho 83669
mmoyle@house.idaho.gov

RE: A Balanced Approach for Long-term Resiliency and Prosperity

Dear Pro-Tempore Winder and Speaker Moyle:

As representatives of the people of Bingham County, we would like to respond to the letter recently issued by the Surface Water Coalition (SWC) which references "reported calls" for a special legislative session.

Contrary to assertions made by the authors of the letter, it is not our intent, at this time, as representatives of an area that is severely impacted by this call, to petition for a special session. The abundant moisture we have been blessed with should allow us to mitigate during this growing season. However, it is our belief that there are underlying issues which must be addressed. The continuation of the status quo is a recipe for disaster.

We find it disappointing that, rather than initiating direct dialogue and seeking to understand the real concerns of fellow-Idahoans, this letter fans the flames of rumor, inaccurately represents our position, unfairly impugns our motives, and casts aspersions on the efforts of groundwater districts to recharge and protect Idaho's precious natural resources.

Bingham Ground Water District (BGWD), for example, has been fully engaged in meeting the terms of the 2015 Settlement Agreement, as they were generally understood, since its inception. Along with significant pumping reduction from individual irrigators, BGWD alone has committed over \$1.5 million to recharge and over \$2.9 million to wet water mitigation in the seven years since the Agreement was signed, resulting in 149,954 ac-ft recharged and 60,158 ac-ft of storage mitigation provided to the SWC. Under the Settlement Agreement, prior to 2021 BGWD accomplished pumping reduction and recharge totaling over 115,000 ac-ft in excess of their individual obligation. Only in 2022 was it made clear that neither cumulative, nor average conservation benefits were acceptable under the Agreement. The SWC letter fails to acknowledge the commitment of BGWD and others in our area to making vast improvements in canal delivery technology which will both help recover the aquifer and help surface water supplies stretch further during times of drought. In addition, the letter fails to acknowledge the inherent weaknesses, counterproductive tenets, and devastating long-term impacts of current mitigation proposals.

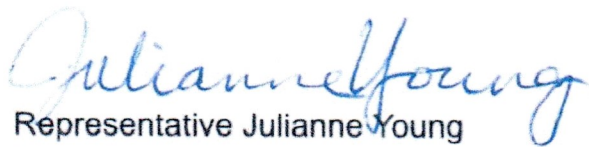
The fact that one of the wettest years we have had in many years has given rise to the most severe curtailment we have ever seen is evidence of the dysfunction which threatens Idaho's economic stability and prosperity. A strict interpretation of prior appropriation without balanced consideration for other moderating constitutional principles truly is "draconian" and is not in the best interest of our state. When the state allows "draconian" policy to be leveraged by one party in a way that creates a power imbalance during negotiations, it undermines those negotiations. Idaho cannot afford to take a one-sided, short-sighted 'us v. them' approach to such a fundamental issue.

We express our continued commitment to supporting, financially and otherwise, efforts to capture and store Idaho water, including in the ESPA, and to maximize the beneficial use of Idaho water resources, both surface and groundwater, to the greatest extent possible. We call on our counterparts in the SWC to recognize that discounting the efforts and concerns of others may temporarily serve to protect the interests of some, but such an approach undermines the interests of the whole over the long term. A unified, balanced approach to water that gives due regard both to seniors' priority of right and to the necessities of subsequent appropriators is the only reliable path to long-term stability and prosperity.

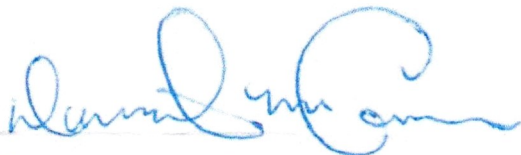
Members of District 30 remain readily available to meet, negotiate, and elaborate on all the aspects of this critical matter. It is our hope that our concerns will be given sincere consideration. Specifically, we respectfully request that District 30, as well as other districts whose interests are particularly impacted by the decisions which may be made, be given a seat at the table in formal discussions which may take place during the interim, in committees and otherwise, under the direction of legislative leadership.

We sincerely appreciate your leadership and efforts to facilitate collaboration between all of the concerned parties in order to secure the future prosperity of the Idaho families throughout our beautiful Gem State who rely on the resiliency of our natural resources.

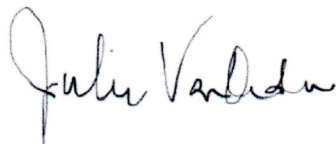
Kind regards,



Representative Julianne Young
State Representative (R-Blackfoot)
Legislative District 30
Idaho House of Representatives



Representative David Cannon
State Representative (R-Blackfoot)
Legislative District 30
Idaho House of Representatives



Senator Julie VanOrden
State Senator (R-Blackfoot)
Legislative District 30
Idaho Senate

cc: (via email only)

Governor Brad Little

Lt. Governor Scott Bedke

Senator Kelly Anthon, Senate Majority Leader

Senator Melissa Wintrow, Senate Minority Leader

Senator Abby Lee, Asst. Majority Leader

Senator James Ruchti, Asst. Minority Leader

Senator Mark Harris, Majority Caucus Chair

Senator Janie Ward-Engelking, Minority Caucus Chair

Senator Van Burtenshaw, Chair Senate Natural Resources Committee

Representative Megan Blanksma, House Majority Leader

Representative Ilana Rubel, House Minority Leader

Representative Sage Dixon, Asst. Majority Leader

Representative Lauren Necochea, Asst. Minority Leader

Representative Dustin Manwaring, Majority Caucus Chair

Representative Ned Burns, Minority Caucus Chair

Representative Ron Mendive, Chair House Natural Resources Committee