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March 19, 2019

Members of the House Resources & Conservation Committee:

Please accept my regrets, as I am unable to attend the Committee hearing on Thursday, March 21, as I will be in Kalispell and Seattle attending meetings on the Columbia River Treaty negotiations. On behalf of the Idaho Water Users Association (IWUA), we urge your support of S-1056a.

IWUA represents canal companies, irrigation districts, ground water districts, municipal and public water suppliers, hydroelectric companies, aquaculture interests, agri-businesses, professional firms and individuals throughout Idaho. Our purpose is to promote, aid and assist in the development, control, conservation, preservation and utilization of Idaho's water resources.

Since 2015, water users along the Eastern Snake Plain have worked to implement the monumental settlement agreement resolving water disputes that had embroiled the region in litigation for over a decade. Idaho's Legislature supported the settlement, recognizing that its purpose was to "resolve litigation, avoid curtailment, maintain sustainable ground and surface water supplies on the ESPA and minimize harm to Idaho's economy, and further supports state management to ensure ESPA water supply issues are timely addressed." SCR-135 (2016). IWUA Resolution 2019-10 supports the settlement:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Idaho Water Users Association supports the 2015 Settlement Agreement entered into between the Surface Water Coalition (SWC) and participating members of the Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, Inc. (IGWA), including its continued implementation.

"Continued implementation" of the settlement agreement requires participation by all involved. S-1056a provides ground water districts with the necessary tools to ensure participation. By giving the Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) authority to curtail water diversions for noncompliance with approved mitigation plans, the State and water users can be assured that all will do their part to restore water levels.

S-1056a was drafted through a workgroup comprised of IDWR, water users and attorneys. This process resulted in a good bill that gives the best opportunity to accomplish the goals of the settlement agreement.

Accordingly, IWUA urges your support of S-1056a. If there are any questions on the bill, I can be reached by cell phone (208-404-9436) or email (paul@iwua.org) at any time.

Sincerely,

Paul Arrington

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Arrington", is written over a horizontal line.