BEFORE THE IDAHO WATER RESOURCE BOARD

IN THE MATTER OF THE PRIEST LAKE WATER MANAGEMENT PROJECT FINAL ENGINEERING AND DESIGN	RESOLUTION TO COMMIT FUNDS AND PROVIDE SIGNATORY AUTHORITY

WHEREAS, the State of Idaho owns the Priest Lake Outlet Dam (dam) which was constructed in 1950 and reconstructed in 1978 as an outlet control structure to maintain lake levels in the Priest Lake in accordance with Idaho Code §70-507; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 1261 passed and approved by the 2018 Legislature updated Idaho Code §70-507 to 1) clarify that management of the state-owned dam on Priest Lake at Outlet Bay is under the jurisdiction of the Idaho Water Resource Board, and 2) to allow for flexibility of the management of the lake level to a range between 3 feet and 3.5 feet on the USGS Priest Lake Outlet gage (located upstream of the dam) after run-off of the winter snowpack until the close of the main recreational season; and

WHEREAS, as a result of drought conditions in northern Idaho in 2015 and 2016, it was difficult to maintain required lake pool levels and downstream minimum flows in the Priest River during the recreational season; and,

WHEREAS, the Priest Lake, Upper Priest Lake and Priest River are significant draws for tourism and recreation, and are highly valued environmental and economic assets for Bonner County and the State of Idaho; and

WHEREAS, in 2016 the Idaho Water Resource Board (IWRB) authorized the expenditure of up to $300,000 from the Revolving Development Account to complete the Priest Lake Water Management Study (Phase 1) to evaluate strategies to meet long-term water management objectives for the Priest Lake and Priest River system; and

WHEREAS, the study has been completed and recommended temporarily raising water surface levels 6 inches during the recreation season of dry years/low water years and integrating real time streamflow data to allow more operational flexibility; and

WHEREAS, the study also recommended outlet dam structural and operational improvements; and

WHEREAS, the study also recommended replacing the current existing porous breakwater with an impervious breakwater structure and dredging of the Thorofare; and

WHEREAS, the estimated cost for these recommended improvements is approximately $5 million (in 2018 dollars); and

WHEREAS, in November 2017 the IWRB accepted and endorsed the recommendations in Phase 1 and recommended proceeding with the project if and when funding becomes available; and

WHEREAS, House Bill 677 passed and approved by the 2018 Legislature included 1) a $2.4 million transfer from the General Fund to the Revolving Development Account, and 2) a redirect of $2,419,600 in the Revolving Development from the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) to be used for the Priest Lake Water Management Project; and

WHEREAS, Mott MacDonald has been selected, through a competitive process, to assist the IWRB with this project; and

WHEREAS, in 2018 the IWRB authorized $600,000 from the Revolving Development Account to complete Preliminary Engineering and Design (Phase 2), which included regulatory permitting and public/stakeholder support; and

WHEREAS, Phase 2 is concluding in the fall of 2019 and IWRB staff has worked in coordination with Mott MacDonald to develop the attached scope of work for the Final Engineering and Design (Phase 3), which includes finalizing regulatory permitting, and bidding assistance; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the IWRB authorizes the expenditure of funds not to exceed $653,000 from the Revolving Development Account for the Final Engineering and Design (Phase 3 of the Priest Lake Water Management Project; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the IWRB authorizes its chairman or designee to execute the necessary agreements or contracts to complete the Final engineering and Design (Phase 3) of the Priest Lake Water Management Project.

DATED this 20th day of September 2019

ROGER W. CHASE, Chairman
Idaho Water Resource Board

ATTEST
VINCE ALBERDI, Secretary

23-2019