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DEPARTMENT OF
WATER RESOURCES

CITY OF
# Caldwell, Idaho

GARRET NANCOLAS
*Mayor*

208.455.3011
(f) 208.455.3003

*City Hall*
411 Blaine Street
Caldwell, Idaho 83605

*Post Office Box*
P.O. Box 1179
Caldwell, Idaho 83606

For a list of the City Council members, visit:
*Website*
www.cityofcaldwell.com

June 9, 2016

Subject: Support Letter for the Requested West Ada County Area of Drilling Concern

Dear Mr. Peppersack:

I write in my capacity as the Public Works Director for the City of Caldwell, and also in my capacity as a domestic well owner in the Treasure Valley of Idaho, to support the City of Meridian's Request for Designation of a West Ada Area of Drilling Concern.

I have been aware of Meridian's efforts to characterize and protect its aquifer system for some time now as the two Cities often share notes at common municipal gatherings and meetings. Indeed, Caldwell has been similarly characterizing its ground water source of water supply in earnest beginning in about 1998. As such, our City has developed very much the same types of sub-surface information presented by the City of Meridian. From that accumulated data, we concur with the conclusions of the Meridian studies documenting the differing aquifer pressures and wide variation in ground water geochemistry with depth below land surface. Accordingly, Caldwell has developed its own technical specifications for its Public Drinking Water System wells that always include full-depth annular casing seals and the other details of well construction and drilling methods detailed in Meridian's request to IDWR. Because all wells drilling into the aquifer have a potential to commingle pressures and ground water chemistry, and to allow natural and man-made contaminants to migrate, the sealing of domestic wells is of great importance to the City of Caldwell.

The City of Caldwell stands in strong support of Meridian's efforts to improve drilling methods and well construction practices in the Treasure Valley where air-rotary-drilled domestic wells constitute the single largest threat to a safe and secure, good-quality ground water supply without treatment.

Finally, I would like to comment in my capacity as a homeowner and domestic well owner. Owing to my developing understanding of the aquifer system and wells in the Treasure Valley, when it came time for me to drill and construct a domestic well for my property outside the Caldwell city limits (and outside the City's water service area), I had to face the tradeoffs between the cost of various well drilling methods and details of well construction first hand. While a direct mud-rotary-drilled well and PVC plastic cased well with full-depth surface seal costs significantly more than the status-quo air-rotary domestic well with thin-wall steel casing and 38-ft surface seal (which we stood by the Department to defend a few years ago), I with my wife made the choice for the more expensive mud rotary drilled, full depth sealed well and I continue to feel very good about that decision. Indeed, my domestic well is essentially equal to the well that is recommended in the City of Meridian's request including the ground water chemistry tests. My experience with this well is that I have no corrosion, no iron-staining, no sand production, consistent water quality, and I feel satisfied my family has a safe drinking water supply without concern for nitrate intrusion or other comingling aquifers issues. In the grand scheme of things, the extra money for a quality product was definitely worth it to my family and it is my expectation that the extra life and reliability of this well will ultimately be the lower cost option.

Thank you for the ability to comment on this important issue for our Valley.

Sincerely,

Brent Orton. P.E, MSCE
Public Works Director
City of Caldwell Idaho

CC: Ed Squires
Tom Barry
Mayor Nancolas