

Jeffrey C. Fereday (Idaho State Bar # 2719)
Michael C. Creamer (Idaho State Bar # 4030)
Brad V. Sneed (Idaho State Bar # 6254)
GIVENS PURSLEY LLP
601 Bannock Street, Suite 200
P.O. Box 2720
Boise, ID 83701-2720
Telephone: (208) 388-1200
Facsimile: (208) 388-1300
Attorneys for Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, Inc.

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Department of Water Resources

**BEFORE THE DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OF THE STATE OF IDAHO**

IN THE MATTER OF DISTRIBUTION OF
WATER TO VARIOUS WATER RIGHTS
HELD BY OR FOR THE BENEFIT OF A & B
IRRIGATION DISTRICT, AMERICAN FALLS
RESERVOIR DISTRICT #2, BURLEY
IRRIGATION DISTRICT, MILNER
IRRIGATION DISTRICT, MINIDOKA
IRRIGATION DISTRICT, NORTH SIDE
CANAL COMPANY, and TWIN FALLS
CANAL COMPANY

**IGWA'S RESPONSE TO SURFACE WATER
COALITION'S MOTION TO CONTINUE
HEARING**

Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, Inc., through its counsel, Givens Pursley LLP, and on behalf of its ground water district members, Aberdeen-American Falls Ground Water District, Magic Valley Ground Water District, Bingham Ground Water District, North Snake Ground Water District, Bonneville-Jefferson Ground Water District, Southwest Irrigation District, and Madison Ground Water District (the "Ground Water Districts" or "IGWA"), hereby responds to the Surface Water Coalition's ("SWC's") October 6, 2005 *Motion for Protective Order and*

Motion to Continue Hearing on Director's May 2, 2005, Amended Order ("SWC Motion to Continue"). IGWA respectfully requests that the Director deny the SWC Motion to Continue.¹

INTRODUCTION

The hearing in this matter is scheduled to begin January 29, 2006. After having failed at last summer's status conference to convince the Director to postpone it for various reasons, SWC now seeks to delay the hearing at least six months on the theory that its experts cannot complete their preparations within the current schedule. Such a delay in the hearing is unnecessary and would severely prejudice the Ground Water Districts.

ARGUMENT

Pursuant to the Department's May 2, 2005 Order ("May 2 Order"), the Ground Water Districts have, at significant expense, acquired storage and natural flow water entitlements, and have secured ground water-surface water conversions and curtailments on several thousand acres of irrigated land. Although it disputes the factual and legal basis for the May 2 Order, and has sought reconsideration and a hearing, IGWA nevertheless has complied with the May 2 Order with respect to obligations imposed for 2005. Indeed, the Ground Water Districts likely have acquired or provided more replacement water than is necessary for 2005.²

IGWA is not willing to go into another irrigation season with the replacement water obligations of its members still subject to dispute pending a hearing on the merits. Continuing the hearing as the SWC proposes, presumably would continue the status quo and require the Ground Water Districts in 2006 again to expend great effort and substantial resources to procure

¹ The SWC's pleading indicates that it contains motions both for protective order and for postponement. However, the text of the SWC Motion to Continue contains no description of the proposed protective order. Instead, it seeks information from the Department and a delay of the hearing.

² IGWA has separately requested an amendment to the May 2 Order in light of changes in storage supplies and other water conditions in 2005, and anticipates hearing from the Director on that score in the near future. See *IGWA's Petition for Reconsideration of the July 22, 2005 Order Amending Replacement Water Requirements*.

and have available replacement water that again might prove unneeded. Thus, IGWA would be in the untenable position of having provided two years of replacement water without ever obtaining a ruling on whether it actually was required to do so. This exercise of acquiring thousands of acre-feet of water is costing the Ground Water Districts millions of dollars, while it has become increasingly apparent that the SWC members will have finished the 2005 irrigation season with a full supply of water. The Ground Water Districts and their members need, and deserve, finality in the matter.

The SWC initiated this action last January with the assertion that its members needed relief “for 2005 and beyond.” SWC Letter of January 14, 2005. It is inconsistent and inappropriate for the SWC now to propose that the hearing not even start until well into the 2006 irrigation season. Carrying the above obligations while facing a hearing that would occur well after the start of the 2006 irrigation season would put the Ground Water Districts’ members in the untenable position of having to secure loans, plant crops, and begin irrigating before they know for sure they will have the ability to pump their wells to irrigate.

The SWC asserts that its experts need at least six more months to understand the new ESPA model and differences between ESPA Model versions 1.0 and 1.1. The assertions in their motion and the affidavits fall far short of a justification for such a delay. SWC’s consultant, Mr. Koreney, asserts that he and his associates have yet to be able to analyze the ESPA model due to the Department’s alleged failure to provide them certain documentation. Yet, the SWC’s other consultant, Dr. Brockway, who has been on the case from the beginning, apparently already has made preliminary runs of version 1.1 of the model. Dr. Brockway asserts in his affidavit that a recent change in the ESPA Model, which at least some on the modeling committee describe as “insignificant,” justifies setting over the entire process for six months. Dr.

Brockway was on the ESPA modeling committee and actively participated in the new model's development. His consulting firm was represented at the IWRRI model training session. The fact that the SWC has elected to also retain additional consultants who may not have experience with MODFLOW programs generally, or the new ESPA model (including versions 1.0 and 1.1) specifically, does not justify the SWC's proposed delay. Presumably Dr. Brockway has the expertise to conduct any modeling analysis the SWC deems necessary or to assist SWC's other consultants in that regard.

Beyond that, it is unclear why the SWC is even concerned at this point about such variations in the model. The Department has not used the ESPA model to evaluate whether material injury has occurred to the SWC's members' water rights or in what amount, and the ESPA model plays only a minor role in evaluating the replacement water supplies offered by IGWA.

With respect to the SWC's assertion that the hearing must wait because the Idaho Historical Society Library will be closed, neither its Motion to Continue nor Mr. Shaw's affidavit indicate why historical information concerning Carey Act development is relevant to responding to the May 2 Order, or if it is relevant, why the SWC did not seek to obtain this information much earlier than it has. Obtaining such information was not contingent on an order authorizing discovery.

Delaying the hearing simply is unnecessary and will prejudice the Ground Water Districts.

It conceivably could be appropriate to extend the deadlines for expert reports by three to four weeks, but not for the reasons raised in the SWC Motion to Continue. Despite reasonable efforts by all of the parties to coordinate numerous site visits and the depositions of the parties'

witnesses and Department staff, these forms of discovery will not be concluded until October 24th at the earliest. This leaves only seven working days for experts to complete their analysis of facts that have been obtained and prepare and file their initial reports, which are due November 4th under the current scheduling order. Moreover, IGWA still has not received a significant amount of documents from SWC members. These include documents that SWC members have refused to produce in response to IGWA's and City of Pocatello's August 9, 2005 Document Production Requests, and documents they have agreed to provide at various depositions of their witnesses but have yet to deliver. IGWA's experts will have a very limited opportunity to analyze this information if and when it is produced. It is not apparent, however, that slipping the due date for expert reports by several weeks to allow experts more time to analyze information and prepare reports necessarily requires the hearing date to be moved.

This matter can be tried within the schedule set out by the Director, and SWC has failed to articulate adequate grounds for delaying it.³

DATED this 13th day of October, 2005.

GIVENS PURSLEY LLP



Jeffrey C. Fereday
Michael C. Creamer
Brad V. Sneed

Attorneys for Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, Inc.

³ As the Director knows, Idaho Power Company ("IPCo") has filed a district court challenge to the Director's denial of IPCo's Motion to Intervene in this matter (Ada County Case No. CV-OC-0506175). If the court were to order IPCo's entry into this case, it is not clear how that would affect the hearing schedule. Presumably, the parties and the Director will evaluate that when and if it arises. But in the meantime, it serves only the SWC's desire for delay to put off the hearing until well into next year's irrigation season.

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on this 13th day of October, 2005, I served a true and correct copy of the foregoing by delivering it to the following individuals by the method indicated below, addressed as stated.

Mr. Karl J. Dreher	<input type="checkbox"/>	U.S. Mail
Director	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facsimile
Idaho Department of Water Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overnight Mail
322 East Front Street	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Hand Delivery
P.O. Box 83720	<input type="checkbox"/>	E-mail
Boise, ID 83720-0098		
C. Tom Arkoosh, Esq.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	U.S. Mail
Arkoosh Law Offices, Chtd.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facsimile
301 Main Street	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overnight Mail
P.O. Box 32	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hand Delivery
Gooding, ID 83330	<input type="checkbox"/>	E-mail
W. Kent Fletcher, Esq.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	U.S. Mail
Fletcher Law Office	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facsimile
P.O. Box 248	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overnight Mail
Burley, ID 83318-0248	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hand Delivery
	<input type="checkbox"/>	E-mail
Roger D. Ling, Esq.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	U.S. Mail
Ling, Robinson & Walker	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facsimile
615 H St.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overnight Mail
P.O. Box 396	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hand Delivery
Rupert, ID 83350-0396	<input type="checkbox"/>	E-mail
John A. Rosholt, Esq.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	U.S. Mail
John K. Simpson, Esq.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facsimile
Travis L. Thompson, Esq.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overnight Mail
Barker, Rosholt & Simpson	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hand Delivery
113 Main Avenue West, Ste. 303	<input type="checkbox"/>	E-mail
Twin Falls, ID 83301-6167		
Kathleen Marion Carr, Esq.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	U.S. Mail
Office of the Field Solicitor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Facsimile
U.S. Department of the Interior	<input type="checkbox"/>	Overnight Mail
960 Broadway Street, Ste. 400	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hand Delivery
Boise, ID 83706	<input type="checkbox"/>	E-mail

Matt J. Howard, Esq. U.S. Bureau of Reclamation Pacific Northwest Region 1150 N. Curtis Road Boise, ID 83706-1234	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> U.S. Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Facsimile <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail
Scott L. Campbell, Esq. Moffatt Thomas Barrett Rock & Fields, Chtd. 101 S. Capitol Blvd., 10th Floor P.O. Box 829 Boise, ID 83701-0829	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> U.S. Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Facsimile <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail
Michael S. Gilmore, Esq. Deputy Attorney General Civil Litigation Division Office of the Attorney General P.O. Box 83720 Boise, ID 83720-0010	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> U.S. Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Facsimile <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail
Josephine P. Beeman, Esq. Beeman & Associates PC 409 West Jefferson Boise, ID 83702-6049	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> U.S. Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Facsimile <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail
Sarah A. Klahn, Esq. White & Jankowski, LLP 511 16th Street, Suite 500 Denver, CO 80202	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> U.S. Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Facsimile <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail
Terry T. Uhling, Esq. J.R. Simplot Company 999 Main Street P.O. Box 27 Boise, ID 83707	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> U.S. Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Facsimile <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail
James C. Tucker, Esq. Idaho Power Company 1221 West Idaho P.O. Box 70 Boise, ID 83707	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> U.S. Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Facsimile <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Hand Delivery <input type="checkbox"/> E-mail

James S. Lochhead, Esq.
Adam T. DeVoe, Esq.
Brownstein, Hyatt & Farber P.C.
410 17th Street, 22nd Floor
Denver, CO 80202

U.S. Mail
 Facsimile
 Overnight Mail
 Hand Delivery
 E-mail

Mr. Ron Carlson
Mr. Lewis Rounds
Idaho Department of Water Resources
Eastern Regional Office
900 North Skyline Dr.
Idaho Falls, ID 83402-6105

U.S. Mail
 Facsimile
 Overnight Mail
 Hand Delivery
 E-mail

Mr. Allen Merritt
Ms. Cindy Yenter
Idaho Department of Water Resources
Southern Regional Office
1341 Fillmore St., Ste. 200
Twin Falls, ID 83301-3033

U.S. Mail
 Facsimile
 Overnight Mail
 Hand Delivery
 E-mail



Jeffrey C. Fereday
Michael C. Creamer
Brad V. Sneed