



Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee

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May 4, 2012

Mr. Gary Spackman
Interim Director
Idaho Department of Water Resources
The Idaho Water Center
322 East Front Street
PO Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0098

Dear Director Spackman:

Greetings from the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee (PBAC). First of all, we wanted to thank you and your staff for the important role you play in managing and protecting Idaho's water resources. We continue to appreciate your agency's expertise and ongoing participation in our efforts to manage and stabilize our region's ground water supplies and your continuing commitment to support us.

As you are aware, and in accordance with the April 1992 Interagency Agreement between the Idaho Department of Water Resources and the Washington Department of Ecology wherein the two agencies agreed to administer the ground water in the Palouse Basin aquifer system, PBAC adopted a ground water management plan and continues to operate within its framework. The primary objective of the 1992 Plan was "to insure stable ground water levels in the aquifer system by limiting annual increases in ground water withdrawals." Please know that we continue to be committed to this goal.

In late 2003 and pursuant to **IDWR Order** dated December 1, 2004, regarding the matter of a **Petition** "seeking designation of a critical ground water area, designation of a ground water management area, moratoriums on approval of new water right appropriations and other actions," the Director ordered the Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee implement the following:

"That to enhance the overall management of the Palouse Basin aquifer system through dialogue among a broader range of interested parties, PBAC should create a "PBAC Citizens Advisory Group" having the following membership and responsibilities and whose involvement with PBAC will be facilitated by the Director's designated ex officio member of PBAC;"

Further, the Order stated the purpose of the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG), including:

"Responsibilities of the Citizens Advisory Group: (1) Develop recommendations for consideration by PBAC for revisions to the groundwater management plan adopted by PBAC and recommendations for implementation strategy to effectively accomplish management plan goals; (2) Develop recommendations for consideration by PBAC for water conservation and recommendations for implementation strategy; (3) Develop recommendations for consideration by PBAC for peer review of research and objectives for future research; (5) Develop recommendations for public participation in implementation of the ground water management plan adopted by PBAC."

In late 2011, PBAC held a planning retreat in Pullman and discussed among other things, the role of the CAG going forward, whether there was value in continuing with the existing structure or a need to retool and repurpose the effort. We also recognized one of the most important initiatives developed as a result of the direct input of the CAG was the recently completed PBAC Framework Project and the critically valuable findings that study has provided the Basin's water managers and users. We gratefully acknowledge and appreciate their efforts and the role they have played here within the Palouse Basin.

While we believe positive things were accomplished since CAG's inception, recent difficulties in recruiting and retaining representative membership (including the original petitioning organizations) as well as a lack of new direction from PBAC has made the CAG less relevant than it was when first formed, or as originally intended in your department's Order. Therefore, **we want to let you know of our intent to dissolve the CAG effective June 1st.**

We recognize the increasingly important role effective communications and dialogue amongst community stakeholders can play around our water issues. Moving forward in 2012, we are currently developing a more robust and active public engagement and communication outreach strategy within and supported by the individual PBAC entities. We assure you that we still have a strong commitment to you and our communities to enhance overall awareness and understanding of the Palouse Basin aquifer system through increased dialogue among a broad range of interested parties. We hope to create more opportunities for public engagement and participation in the future.

We recognize and appreciate the important relationship and dialogue that exists between the PBAC entities, the Idaho Department of Water Resources, and the Washington Department of Ecology. We will continue actively working to ensure the ground water management in the Palouse is effective and responsible.

Please contact us should you have questions.

Sincerely,



Tom Scallorn
Chair, Palouse Basin Aquifer Committee

Cc (electronic):

Julie Titone, Chair, PBAC Citizens Advisory Group
Mike McVay, ex officio Citizens Advisory Group member, Idaho Department of Water Resources
Keith Stoffel, ex officio Citizens Advisory Group member, Washington Department of Ecology