

IN THE SENATE

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 137

BY RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1
2 STATING FINDINGS OF THE LEGISLATURE AND REQUESTING THAT THE IDAHO WATER
3 RESOURCE BOARD ADDRESS STATEWIDE AQUIFER STABILIZATION AND SUSTAIN-
4 ABILITY PROJECTS INCLUDING MANAGED RECHARGE, CONDUCT AQUIFER RECHARGE
5 STUDIES AND DEVELOP A GROUND WATER MODEL, WITH ALL NECESSARY MEASURE-
6 MENT NETWORKS, FOR THE TREASURE VALLEY AQUIFER, PARTNER IN STUDIES WITH
7 LOCAL ENTITIES TO FIND ALTERNATE WATER SUPPLIES FOR MOUNTAIN HOME, PAR-
8 TICIPATE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SURFACE WATER USERS, THE GROUND WATER
9 USERS, AND OTHER PARTIES IN THE BIG AND LITTLE WOOD RIVER BASINS AND AT-
10 TEMPT TO FIND RESOLUTION TO THE WATER DELIVERY CALLS, PARTNER IN STUDIES
11 WITH LOCAL ENTITIES TO FIND ALTERNATE WATER SUPPLIES FOR THE PALOUSE
12 BASIN, UNDERTAKE STUDIES OF THE DEEP REGIONAL AQUIFER IN THE LEWISTON
13 AREA IN ORDER TO DEFINE ITS GEOGRAPHIC EXTENT AND SUSTAINABLE YIELD AND
14 EVALUATE OTHER AQUIFERS ACROSS THE STATE AND TAKE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AS
15 NECESSARY.

16 Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

17 WHEREAS, Policy 1I of the 2012 Idaho State Water Plan provides that
18 "aquifer recharge should be promoted and encouraged, consistent with state
19 law"; and

20 WHEREAS, ground water supplies across Idaho have been declining; and

21 WHEREAS, in select areas of the Treasure Valley, aquifer water levels
22 are declining; and

23 WHEREAS, various studies predict significant population increases in
24 the Treasure Valley over the next 50 years, placing additional demand on the
25 aquifer; and

26 WHEREAS, the Mountain Home Aquifer is currently being over-drafted by
27 approximately 30,000 acre-feet per year. While the Idaho Water Resource
28 Board has acquired surface water rights and is cooperating with Mountain
29 Home Air Force Base to supply alternative surface water to the base, addi-
30 tional aquifer management projects must be constructed and implemented to
31 restore aquifer equilibrium; and

32 WHEREAS, conjunctive water administration delivery calls have been
33 filed in the Big and Little Wood River Basins alleging that senior, surface
34 water irrigation water rights have been injured by upstream junior-priority
35 ground water pumping resulting from water supply issues; and

36 WHEREAS, the deep aquifer in the Palouse Basin, which supplies water to
37 the City of Moscow and the University of Idaho in addition to communities in
38 Washington, has been declining for many decades despite conservation mea-
39 sures implemented by the Palouse Basin communities; and

40 WHEREAS, the Department of Water Resources recently created the Lewis-
41 ton Plateau Ground Water Management Area (GWMA) in response to declining wa-
42 ter levels in the shallow perched aquifers of the area. While the manage-
43 ment plan for the GWMA requires that most future development in the GWMA must

1 divert water from the deep regional aquifer, the geographic extent and sus-
2 tainable yield of the deep aquifer is unknown and the studies and models nec-
3 essary to accurately characterize the aquifer do not exist; and

4 WHEREAS, ground water declines are also occurring in the Big Lost, Raft
5 River, Malad and other aquifers across the state; and

6 WHEREAS, ground water levels and aquifer storage in some aquifers are
7 inadequate to sustain a supply of water for surface and ground water irriga-
8 tion, hydropower, municipal, industrial uses, and other uses, the curtail-
9 ment of which would cause severe economic harm to the State of Idaho; and

10 WHEREAS, stabilizing and enhancing aquifer water levels is in the pub-
11 lic interest and will sustain the water supply for consumptive and noncon-
12 sumptive uses and minimize harm to Idaho's economy arising from water supply
13 shortages.

14 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Second Regular Ses-
15 sion of the Sixty-third Idaho Legislature, the Senate and the House of Repre-
16 sentatives concurring therein, that the Legislature requests that the Idaho
17 Water Resource Board address statewide aquifer stabilization and sustain-
18 ability projects including managed recharge.

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Idaho Water Resource Board conduct
20 aquifer recharge studies and develop a ground water model, with all neces-
21 sary measurement networks, for the Treasure Valley Aquifer.

22 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Idaho Water Resource Board partner in
23 studies with local entities to find alternate water supplies for Mountain
24 Home.

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Idaho Water Resource Board participate
26 in discussions with the surface water users, the ground water users, and
27 other parties in the Big and Little Wood River Basins and attempt to find
28 resolution to the water delivery calls.

29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Idaho Water Resource Board partner in
30 studies with local entities to find alternate water supplies for the Palouse
31 Basin.

32 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Idaho Water Resource Board undertake
33 studies of the deep regional aquifer in the Lewiston area in order to define
34 its geographic extent and sustainable yield.

35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Idaho Water Resource Board evaluate
36 other aquifers across the state and take management actions as necessary.