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February 1, 2016

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U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
WaterSMART Program
Bureau of Reclamation
Mail Code 94-27852
Denver Federal Center, Bldg. 67, Rm. 152
6th Avenue and Kipling Street
Denver, CO 80225

RE: Letter of Support – Galena Ground Water District WaterSMART Grant Application

Dear U.S. Bureau of Reclamation:

Please accept this letter of support for the Galena Ground Water District's (GGWD) application for a WaterSMART Water & Energy Efficiency Grant to install "smart" irrigation systems for residential homeowners and condominium/townhome associations throughout the GGWD's boundaries to provide substantial water savings by reducing outdoor landscaping water usage.

The GGWD is located in the Wood River Valley and extends from the upper valley near Galena Summit and extends south to just south of Bellevue, ID. The Wood River Valley water system is a complex system of dynamic hydrologic interconnection between ground and surface water. Mountain snowpack, precipitation, and leakage from canals recharge the regional aquifer while ground water pumping is a significant source of discharge from the aquifer.

The entire Wood River Valley is the subject of a water delivery call by downstream senior water right holders in February 2015. These senior downstream water users primarily utilize water moving down the Big Wood River and aquifer system and accruing to storage in Magic Reservoir or emerging as spring flows in Silver Creek.

The Idaho Water Resource Board (Board) supports the GGWD's project to install smart irrigation systems throughout their service area because it will reduce ground water demands within the Wood River Valley and assist the Board in its efforts to stabilize aquifers throughout the state.

The project also has numerous benefits for the GGWD. Pursuing ground

water conservation projects can help water providers reduce water demands, lower operational costs such as pumping and water treatment, and reduce or postpone the need for additional water supplies. The focus of this project is landscape irrigation, the largest source of municipal consumption of water in the Wood River Valley, and will help the GGWD mitigate water use conflicts generated by the most recent water call in the Valley.

Reducing water demand in the upper Wood River Valley will have positive effects on irrigation water users in the lower Wood River Valley. These irrigation water users rely partly on water supplies that originate in the Wood River Valley, and partly on Snake River storage water supplies brought into the area by the American Falls Reservoir District No. 2 (AFRD2) through the Milner-Gooding Canal, which was constructed by Reclamation as part of the Minidoka Project. The AFRD2 is a storage spaceholder in Reclamation's Snake River Reservoirs.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "B. Patton", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Brian Patton, P.E.
Executive Officer,
Idaho Water Resource Board