



June 13, 2024

Governor Brad Little
700 W. Jefferson St. Boise, ID 83702

Dear Governor, Little,

The Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce (GIFCC), its board of directors, and its members firmly believe that strong businesses build strong and healthy communities. It is with this principle in mind that GIFCC feels compelled to take an official position on the water curtailment issued by Director Weaver. We urgently call on you, Governor Little, to intervene and ensure that the remaining issues are resolved fairly and equitably, as these issues are of immense significance.

The Curtailment Order, which is causing hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland to dry up, has unspeakable economic consequences for the entire state, with Eastern Idaho bearing the brunt. While the focus has predominantly been on the immediate impact on growers, the ramifications extend far beyond. The GIFCC's Agricultural and Water Use Committee, representing the entire agricultural value chain—from equipment suppliers to growers and processors—contributes billions of dollars to our tax base. The severity of this situation cannot be overstated.

Our banking industry members have received numerous calls from distressed growers who are struggling to navigate the financial uncertainties brought on by this order. The uncertainty surrounding water availability is already causing land values to plummet, creating a ripple effect that threatens the economic stability of our region. This is not a case of unnecessary alarmism; the situation is dire, and the proverbial sky is indeed falling for Eastern Idaho.

We need the stability that comes from good governance and long-term strategic planning to ensure that Idaho develops solutions for better water resource management. Agriculture is the backbone of our community and economy; its survival is essential for the vibrancy and protection of our communities from future curtailments. Robust agricultural policies foster investment and maximize our natural resources for the benefit of all Idahoans.

The GIFCC, along with its dedicated committees, is ready to contribute to solving this crisis. We possess unique and innovative solutions that have yet to be heard. Our commitment to this issue is unwavering, and we are prepared to collaborate fully to develop sustainable policies that support agriculture and ensure economic stability.

Governor Little, the time for decisive action is now. We implore you to intervene and bring your leadership to bear on this critical issue. The GIFCC Agriculture and Water Use Committee would like to assist in crafting the solutions that will safeguard our water resources and secure a prosperous future for Idaho.

Sincerely,

Paul Baker,
President/CEO
The Greater Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce