

News Release

Pioneer Irrigation District

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IDAHO'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO HEAR PIONEER'S URBAN RUN OFF, CANAL ENCROACHMENT ISSUES

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Idaho's entire Congressional delegation heard today (Tuesday, Apr. 15) about the problems being faced by Pioneer Irrigation District as it tries to come to grips with the pressing issues of canal property encroachment and illegal urban storm water runoff dumping into its canals and drains, District officials said today.

Pioneer recently filed suit against the City of Caldwell to stop developers from building municipal storm water runoff sewers dumping into the District's canals and drains. In September 2006, Caldwell adopted a revised storm water management manual that gave developers a mandate to build municipal storm water drains that dump directly into Pioneer canals and irrigation drains without permission of the District.

Pioneer's issues were discussed with Idaho's two senators and two representatives at a series of special meetings in the nation's capital after the District requested that the state's largest water user group bring their concerns to the Delegation.

IWUA Executive Director Norm Semanko, accompanied by IWUA's President and other officers of the association, agreed to brief the delegation on the issue. He was joined by a representative of the District at the Washington, DC meeting.

Idaho law expressly prohibits encroachment into private property of irrigation entities. Also, the Environmental Protection Agency has found that urban storm water runoff can include such dangerous elements as petroleum products, toxic vehicle chemicals; pesticides and fertilizers from lawns and gardens; viruses, E. coli bacteria and other products from animal and pet waste and failing septic systems; heavy metals from roof shingles and motor vehicles; and road salts.

Pioneer officials say they plan to employ a variety of different avenues, in addition to the courts, in an attempt to find solutions. Bringing Idaho's Congressional delegation into the debate is just one of those avenues, the District said.

For more than a century Pioneer Irrigation District has provided irrigation and agricultural drainage services to Canyon County land owners. The District currently maintains about 7,000 accounts providing irrigation water to 34,000 acres of residential and farmland in Canyon County.

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