



BRAD LITTLE
Governor
STATE OF IDAHO

SCOTT BEDKE
Lt. Governor
STATE OF IDAHO

September 23, 2024

President Joe Biden
Vice President Kamala Harris
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden and Vice President Harris,

We are deeply concerned about your administration's efforts to increase federal oversight of groundwater in the states.

The recent request for information* from the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) is alarming to Idahoans, particularly in the agricultural community. The overly broad request for information suggests the council has already predetermined the actions needed by the federal government with respect to our groundwater.

Namely, it appears the council has already concluded that the agriculture industry needs to be the focal point of your groundwater grab, prior to even receiving any feedback.

Over and over, your administration has proposed overreaching rules that negatively impact farmers and ranchers – WOTUS, public lands and wildfire mismanagement, and grazing regulations to name a few. Based on your regulatory track record, the PCAST public input process is cause for concern in the West.

Additionally, during the PCAST workshop in Arizona this summer, the overwhelming message your council received was consistent with Idahoans' concerns – the federal government has no place in groundwater management. Congress has long left those actions up to the states and has limited its involvement to funding of projects and technology advancements. Your administration should follow suit.

The request for information raises many questions for farmers, ranchers, manufacturers, recreationists, energy producers, and more in relation to how the information will be used. For example:

1. How will you categorize data submissions based on the credibility of the information?
2. Will the information be used to create any additional federal regulations?
3. Did you work with any states to help develop the request for information?
4. After receiving comments and hosting the workshop, what is PCAST planning next?
5. Is PCAST developing a report and/or recommendation based on the information it has received in this process?
6. How will states be engaged in the development of any reports and/or recommendations?
7. Will the public be able to provide comments on any draft reports and/or recommendations developed?

Perhaps most alarming is the direct statement from PCAST that this effort is, “to support the development of a report to advance government-wide action on groundwater.” It shouldn’t surprise either of you that Idahoans generally reject the term “government-wide action,” especially as it relates to our precious water.

We request you pause any further action on the PCAST report until the critical questions above are answered.

Management of water is a state issue. We do not invite or welcome the involvement of the federal government in making decisions about this precious resource.

Sincerely,



Brad Little
Governor of Idaho



Scott Bedke
Lt. Governor of Idaho

* <https://www.whitehouse.gov/pcast/briefing-room/2024/04/25/pcast-welcomes-public-input-on-americas-groundwater-challenges/>