



## OPINION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 10, 2017

### **SAFE, RESPONSIBLE WATER INJECTION WILL BENEFIT IDAHO'S OIL AND GAS INDUSTRY**

*By Mick Thomas  
Oil and Gas Division Administrator  
Idaho Department of Lands*

Having the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency oversee the use and disposal of fluids used in oil and gas production in Idaho, rather than the State, is the right move for the environment and the industry.

The Idaho Department of Water Resources recently announced that it would ask the EPA run the Class II injection program in Idaho, regulating disposal of water and other fluids pumped to the surface in the process of drilling for oil and gas.

Injecting the water back into the ground is the most economical disposal method being used in the United States, but Idaho is new to the industry and is the only hydrocarbon-producing state without a Class II program in place. That puts us at a significant disadvantage when competing to sell our oil and gas to national and international markets.

It's important to recognize that Idaho's geology is different from many other oil and gas producing states. Our hydrocarbon production occurs in porous rock "reservoirs." A hole is drilled down through the ground to reach the porous rock of those reservoirs. The process does not involve hydraulic fracturing in which fluids are injected into the rock and drawn back out with the hydrocarbons.

In the Payette Basin, wells yield hydrocarbons along with water. The hydrocarbons are separated and sold while the wastewater is trucked to evaporation ponds for disposal.

The goal of a Class II injection program is to enable the naturally occurring water that comes out of the well to be put back into the porous rock reservoir from where it came. There is no significant increase in pressure within the reservoir so the kind of seismic events sometimes associated with hydraulic fracturing are highly unlikely, and water chemistry will be carefully monitored by the State to ensure that quality standards are maintained.

Please visit our webpage at [ogcc.idaho.gov](http://ogcc.idaho.gov) to find presentations by the EPA, Water Resources, the Idaho Department of Lands and Idaho Department of Environmental Quality regarding the transfer process as well as a description of what a Class II program in Idaho would involve. You also can contact the Oil and Gas Division at Lands if you have any questions or would like additional information.

A vibrant oil and gas industry certainly can have a positive impact on Idaho's economy, and we are well positioned to take advantage of that opportunity thanks to the cooperative efforts of mineral rights owners, operators and the Idaho Legislature.

# # #

405 words

**NEWS MEDIA CONTACT:**

Emily Callihan, IDL Public Information Officer  
208-334-0236 or [ecallihan@idl.idaho.gov](mailto:ecallihan@idl.idaho.gov)