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December 20, 2019

Paula Wilson
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
1410 N. Hilton
Boise, ID 83706

Submitted via email to: paula.wilson@deq.idaho.gov

RE: Docket No. 58-0101-1901 Prescribed Fire Negotiated Rulemaking following November 25th Meeting

Dear Ms. Wilson:

Since 1973, the Idaho Conservation League (“ICL”) has been Idaho’s leading voice for clean water, clean air, and wilderness – values that are the foundation for Idaho’s extraordinary quality of life. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, ICL works to protect these values through public education, outreach, advocacy, and policy development. ICL is Idaho's largest state-based conservation organization and represents over 30,000 supporters, many of whom have a deep personal interest in protecting Idaho’s air quality, human health and our environment.

Please contact me at (208) 645-6933 x23 or awalkins@idahoconservation.org if you have any questions regarding our comments or if we can provide you with any additional information on this matter. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Austin Walkins
Senior Conservation Associate

Smoke Management Budget and Future Projections

During the November 25th meeting there was discussion around how IDEQ will implement these rules, particularly regarding how IDEQ will analyze and account for future stressors, including climate change, multi-jurisdictional and interstate burning, and the private sector. We recognize that this is a complex question, but we raise this comment to stress the need for IDEQ to develop the analytical tools necessary to answer these questions as soon as possible.

Threshold Delineating Small and Large Pile Burns

Stakeholders raised concerns that the current threshold of 1,200 ft³ delineating small and large pile burns could be problematic for private sector burners. IDEQ appeared to indicate that they would be amenable to reviewing and potentially changing this value. We understand that this value may present logistical challenges to burn practices; however, we must stress that the intent of these rules is to focus on the public health and environmental impact of smoke management. Changes to threshold values such as the small versus large pile burner categories must be based on scientifically defensible analyses showing that the reduced oversight of small pile burners will not negatively impact public health or the environment.

Public Notification of Burning Required in Rule

This rule should include a requirement to notify the public of burn decisions. It may be appropriate to outline notification implementation requirements in a guidance document, but this rule should include an enforceable notification requirement.