

IDAHO SENATORS OPPOSE UNFAIR WATER STANDARDS

Washington, DC – U.S. Senators Mike Crapo and Jim Risch voiced their strong opposition to a plan by the Washington Department of Ecology to require new discharge standards that are more stringent on Idaho dischargers than those in Washington. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region X has announced their approval of the department's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plan to reduce the amount of phosphorus discharged into the Spokane River.

Senator Mike Crapo said, "Idaho dischargers are more than willing to do their part to ensure a cleaner river, but this move holds Idaho to a much stricter standard than Washington State right over the border. The EPA is pushing ahead on a standard that is unachievable and doesn't fully recognize the impacts to Idahoans. I join with the rest of the Idaho delegation in continuing to advocate for the Idaho dischargers."

Senator Risch added, "I am very disappointed with EPA's approval of this TMDL plan. Throughout my involvement in this issue, the Idaho stakeholders have demonstrated a strong commitment to improve the water quality of the Spokane River. They have been trying all along to work with Ecology and the EPA for a reasonable outcome. It's pretty clear that Idaho's concerns fell on deaf ears."

"The technology doesn't even exist to allow wastewater treatment plants at Coeur d'Alene, Hayden and Post Falls to attain the standards the EPA will now require. Even if the technology is developed, ratepayers will see their sewer bills double or even triple in order to pay for it. The indifference shown by Ecology and EPA in this case is appalling," Risch concluded.

The new standard for phosphorus discharge is 36 parts per billion for Idaho wastewater facilities and 42 parts per billion for the Spokane facility.