



PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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Amended megaload complaint brings in Highway Administration

BOISE — In an amended complaint filed late yesterday evening, Idaho Rivers United named the Federal Highway Administration as an additional defendant in its federal lawsuit that charges the government with failing to protect the Wild & Scenic values of the Middle Fork Clearwater and Lochsa rivers in north central Idaho.

“As we identify parties with legal responsibilities to protect the Wild & Scenic values of the Middle Fork Clearwater and Lochsa rivers, they should expect to become defendants in this litigation,” said IRU Conservation Director Kevin Lewis. “The Federal Highway Administration clearly shares in the responsibility to protect the values of this river corridor.”

IRU is represented by the non-profit law firm Advocates for the West.

The original lawsuit, filed March 10, charged the U.S. Forest Service with violating the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act and other federal laws by allowing the Idaho Transportation Department to issue permits for hundreds of road-closing, mega-sized shipments of mining and industrial equipment via U.S. Highway 12.

Filed in Boise’s U.S. District Court, the lawsuit and amended complaint are so far the only federal actions challenging Exxon Mobil’s proposal to transport hundreds of so-called mega-loads up Highway 12 and through the Clearwater and Lochsa Wild & Scenic river corridors, for which the Forest Service and Highway Administration have management responsibility.

The equipment — up to 24-feet wide, 200 feet long and three stories tall — creates a massive rolling roadblock and visual blight, impedes recreation and impacts other values as they lumber along a National Scenic Byway and through a Wild & Scenic river corridor.

“These rivers represent the embodiment of what the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act was meant to protect,” Lewis said. “The industrialization of this river corridor clearly violates the desires of Idaho’s late Sen. Frank Church, who authored the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. It also violates the will of Congress and the American people, who have overwhelmingly supported the protection of these two treasured rivers.”

Idaho Rivers United is a non-profit river conservation group with 3,500 members, most of whom live in Idaho. The group’s mission is to protect and restore the rivers of Idaho.

— End —

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