



STATE OF IDAHO
DEPARTMENT OF
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

RECEIVED

2014 OCT -9 PM 3:09

IDAHO PUBLIC
UTILITIES COMMISSION

1445 North Orchard • Boise, Idaho 83706 • (208) 373-0550
www.deq.idaho.gov

C.L. "Butch" Otter, Governor
Curt Fransen, Director

October 7, 2014

UWI-W-14-01

Jean Jewell
Idaho Public Utilities Commission
472 W. Washington
Boise, ID 83702

Re: Brian Subdivision Water Users Association Nitrate Challenges

Dear Ms. Jewell:

It is my understanding that the Brian Subdivision Water Users Association (Brian Water) is currently working through the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) as part of their mitigation strategy in dealing with elevated nitrate levels in their drinking water. I would like to take this opportunity to explain the background and history behind this system and their path towards compliance.

Nitrate is considered an acute contaminant in drinking water because it can have serious health impacts in a relatively short amount of time following consumption. Nitrate levels above 10 mg/L are particularly serious for infants less than six months old, causing methemoglobinemia or blue baby syndrome. Because of the seriousness of elevated nitrate levels, Brian Water has been required to continue to provide public notification to its customers on a routine basis since 2011, instructing customers not to drink the water or use it to make formula.

The system was, as you probably know, owned by Tony Bowar. He first experienced the nitrate issues in 2010 until they continued to climb and eventually exceeded the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 10 mg/L. The system was disapproved in February of 2011 and Tony entered into a consent order shortly after in April of 2011. The system sat with Tony, and made very little progress, until it was transferred to the homeowners in 2013. The homeowners inherited the nitrate problems as well as the consent order and the requirement to mitigate the problem, and have been working diligently to resolve it.

As part of the process involved in solving this problem, the representatives of Brian Water have explored numerous options, but have found difficulty getting any of them to work for their specific scenario. They have explored Point-of-Use (POU) treatment, looking into purchasing individual in-home filters for each house. Unfortunately, because of the acute risk associated with nitrate, POU treatment is not allowed by DEQ. Centralized treatment at the wellhead has also been explored, but the system has found that there is nowhere to discharge the waste stream produced by centralized treatment in a way that does not simply exacerbate the problem further. Drilling a brand new well was also difficult due to the lack of siting for a well lot that meets setback requirements, as well as the requirement to have a redundant source of supply, which would necessitate drilling two new wells that do not have nitrate issues.

10/08/2014
Jean Jewel
Page 2

As you can see, this system has worked on this issue for quite some time, and has explored many different options, which has led them to the interconnection with United Water and working with the PUC. DEQ fully supports Brian Water in their pursuit of an interconnection with United Water as it will provide their customers with a very reliable source of drinking water that meets all health based standards. If you have any questions regarding nitrate or Brian Water, feel free to contact me at (208) 373-0568 or via e-mail at brandon.lowder@deq.idaho.gov.

Sincerely,



Brandon Lowder
Regional Drinking Water Supervisor

ec: TRIM 2014ACA5889