

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to talk about my bill - H.R. 331. Mr. Hipkey, good to see you, thank you for coming all this way from Idaho!

This legislation amends the Aquifer Recharge Flexibility Act, which was enacted into law in 2020, to ensure states, local governments, Tribes, and public entities can use existing Bureau of Land Management rights-of-way, easements, and permits for aquifer recharge without unnecessary federal delays.

The Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer is essential to Idaho's agricultural economy and the communities that rely on it. From ranchers in Owyhee County to orchardists in the Payette River Basin and dairy operations in the Treasure Valley, countless Idahoans depend on this resource to support their livelihoods. Towns like Emmett, Weiser, and Caldwell are just a few examples of communities sustained by its availability.

Unfortunately, misinterpretation of the original law by the BLM has created confusion and stalled critical recharge projects in Idaho. H.R. 331 provides a clear, efficient path forward, ensuring these projects can proceed without redundant bureaucracy.

This bill supports Idaho's agricultural future by ensuring stability for the families, farms, and businesses central to the state's economy. I urge my colleagues to support this important piece of legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.