

BRAD LITTLE
GOVERNOR

Wendi Secrist
Executive Director



Deni Hoehne
Chair

John Young
Vice Chair

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

317 W Main Street, Boise, Idaho 83735-0510

April 18, 2022

U.S. Congressman Mike Simpson
410 Memorial Drive
Idaho Falls, ID 83402

RE: FY2023 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations

Dear U.S. Congressman Mike Simpson:

I am expressing my full support for the Idaho Rural Water Association's funding request, which asks for expanded workforce training programs in drinking and wastewater operations.

The entire state requires skilled employees in these trades. We've been working with IRWA since 2015 to address workforce shortages, including the establishment of registered apprenticeship programs, revising licensing requirements to streamline the apprenticeship pathway, equipping the training center with equipment to provide virtual training, and establishing a partnership between IRWA and Idaho Transportation Department to provide heavy equipment operator training. This funding will aid current employees to gain more credentials while they continue working, and it will expand the potential hiring pool into Idaho's rural communities. This funding will strengthen local businesses, increase local wages, and build greater economic stability throughout the state as water and wastewater are critical to economic development efforts.

I greatly appreciate your advocacy for this funding request. Please don't hesitate to reach out with questions. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wendi Secrist".

Executive Director



04-14-2021
Idaho Rural Water Association
Board of Directors
6395 W. Gowen Rd
Boise, ID 83709

Dear Representative Mike Simpson,

A Learning Center where operators can go to learn hands-on how to use a jar tester and other lab equipment? That is Idaho Rural Water Association's vision for the future. Learning these skills is important for many reasons including saving on chemicals in our actual water treatment process. Right now, many systems must guess or rely on past practices that may not be correct. Having this lab and learning stations available will provide training vital to eliminating the guesswork and doing things right.

Having a laboratory at the Idaho Rural Water Association Learning and Training Center will allow us to reach a lot of operators within the state of Idaho. Currently, there are no hands-on options for this kind of training. Having one would be invaluable. I am grateful for Idaho Rural Water's foresight and vision in wanting to create this laboratory with learning stations. It's visionary and it will go a long way toward instructing operators in our industry.

This lab and learning stations will also put the Idaho Rural Water Association at the forefront of training options for operators within the state of Idaho, regardless of the size of the drinking water and wastewater system. I hope that you provide funding. It would be great to have this training center built out.

Sincerely,
Dion Holton
IRWA Circuit Rider

04-14-2021

Idaho Rural Water Association
Board of Directors
6395 W. Gowen Rd
Boise, ID 83709

Dear Representative Mike Simpson,

I would like to extend sincere appreciation to IRWA for the technical assistance and training provided to the operators and apprentices statewide. In addition to the in-person and online training, a hands-on laboratory with learning stations would be vital for those entering the drinking water and wastewater industry. Hands-on learning in a controlled and safe environment will provide learners with proper skills early on and correct bad habits for those more advanced in their careers.

Funding to provide such learning tools for Idaho Rural Water Association would be greatly appreciated. Additionally, the learning stations will provide years of benefits for individuals in desperate need of such training. IRWA's efforts have helped us maintain our infrastructure and educate our personnel. The services your organization provides to our community are invaluable. The cities, towns, and people of the State of Idaho need you!

Sincerely,

Brad Anderson

Contract Operator

Township Park Estates

Iona, Idaho