



Air Quality Permitting Response to Public Comments

February 24, 2017

Tier I Operating Permit No. T1-2016.0039

Project No. 61748

**Idaho Power Company – Bennett Mountain
Mountain Home, Idaho**

Facility ID No. 039-00025

Prepared by:
Morrie Lewis, Permit Writer 
AIR QUALITY DIVISION

Final

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BACKGROUND

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) provided for public comment on the draft Tier I operating permit to Idaho Power Company – Bennett Mountain from November 30 to December 30, 2016, in accordance with IDAPA 58.01.01.364. During this period, comments were submitted in response to DEQ's proposed action. Each comment and DEQ's response is provided in the following section. All comments submitted in response to DEQ's proposed action are included in the appendix of this document.

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

Public comments regarding the technical and regulatory analyses and the air quality aspects of the draft permit are summarized below. Questions, comments, and/or suggestions received during the comment period that did not relate to the air quality aspects of the permit application, the Department's technical analysis, or the draft permit are not addressed. For reference purposes, a copy of the Rules for the Control of Air Pollution in Idaho can be found at: adminrules.idaho.gov/rules/current/58/0101.pdf.

Comment 1:

DEQ's Statement of Basis (SOB) lists four emission units or activities that were deemed insignificant based on the regulatory authority of Idaho's Air Quality Rules (IDAPA 58.01.01). We are concerned that the regulatory authority utilized to justify these exemptions may be out-of-date relative to more recent changes to federal regulations, particularly with regard to emissions from storage tanks containing volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

We are also concerned regarding the determination that surface coating operations that use less than two (2) gallons per day are insignificant. IDAPA 58.01.01.317.01.b.i(17) is listed as the justification for this determination; however this justification is incongruent with other surface coating permitting determinations made by DEQ.

Response 1:

Tables listing insignificant activities appear both in the permit (Section 5) and in the statement of basis (Section 5.2), which list those units or activities claimed in the application as insignificant on the basis of size or production rate in accordance with IDAPA 58.01.01.317.01.b.i. Insignificant activities and corresponding citations are incorporated directly from the Rules (IDAPA 58.01.01). The most recent relevant rulemaking to the list of insignificant activities occurred in 1998, and the tables into the permit and statement of basis appropriately incorporate these updates.

Although outside the scope of this permitting action, it may be noted that insignificant activities are defined in the Rules (IDAPA 58.01.01) specifically for the Tier I permitting program, and applicable only to facilities classified as major sources. Whether activities are determined to be insignificant under Section 317 (IDAPA 58.01.01.317) requirements for the Tier I program has no bearing on requirements for permits to construct (PTC) under Sections 200–228 (IDAPA 58.01.01.220-228). Emissions concerning insignificant activities are also not exempt from consideration in applicability and compliance determinations, and must be assessed and provided to DEQ whenever necessary to make such regulatory evaluations or determinations, in accordance with IDAPA 58.01.01.314.12 and 317.01. In addition, any such emission unit or activity that becomes subject to an applicable requirement (such as a federal NSPS or MACT) would no longer qualify as insignificant, in accordance with IDAPA 58.01.01.317.01.

Updates to the Rules (IDAPA 58.01.01) are made via the rulemaking process, which includes opportunities for review and input by the public, the Board of Environmental Quality, and the Idaho legislature. Additional information concerning the rulemaking process can be found on the DEQ website (www.deq.idaho.gov/laws-rules-etc/deq-rulemakings).

Comment 2:

We are curious if DEQ has assessed the potential cumulative impact of this facility operating simultaneously with other sources.

Response 2:

Ambient air quality modeling is not required for processing operating permit renewals under the Tier I program, in accordance with Sections 300-399 of the Rules (IDAPA 58.01.01.300-399). Therefore, an ambient air impact analyses was not required nor included in the final permitting package for this Tier I permit renewal.

Although outside the scope of this permitting action, ambient air quality impact analysis has been required in prior PTC permitting actions for Idaho Power Company – Bennett Mountain. A list of prior permitting actions was included in the Facility Permitting History section of the statement of basis, and final permitting documents for some of these permitting actions are available to download online (www.deq.idaho.gov/permitting/issued-permits). Additional information can be obtained by requesting public records for these or other permitting actions, with a request form available online (www.deq.idaho.gov/contact-us/public-records-request/online-prr-request-form).

Appendix

Public Comments Submitted for

Tier I Operating Permit No.

T1-2016.0039 Project No. 61748



208.345.6933 • PO Box 844, Boise, ID 83702 • www.idahoconservation.org

12/22/2016

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Submitted via email: anne.drier@deq.idaho.gov and morrie.lewis@deq.idaho.gov

RE: Tier 1 Operating Permit Renewal for Idaho Power Company – Bennett Mountain

Dear Ms. Drier and Mr. Lewis;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed renewal of the Tier 1 Operating Permit for Idaho Power Company's (IPC) Bennett Mountain facility in Mountain Home, ID.

Since 1973, the Idaho Conservation League has been Idaho's leading voice for clean water, clean air and wilderness—values that are the foundation for Idaho's extraordinary quality of life. The Idaho Conservation League works to protect these values through public education, outreach, advocacy and policy development. As Idaho's largest state-based conservation organization, we represent over 25,000 supporters, many of whom have a deep personal interest in protecting Idaho's air quality.

Our detailed comments follow this letter. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 208-345-6933 ext. 23 or ahopkins@idahoconservation.org if you have any questions regarding our comments or if we can provide you with any additional information on this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Austin Hopkins".

Austin Hopkins
Conservation Assistant

RE: Idaho Conservation League comments on Tier 1 Operating Permit Renewal for Idaho Power Company – Bennett Mountain

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Insignificant Emissions

Table 5.4 in DEQ's Statement of Basis (SOB) lists four emission units or activities that were deemed insignificant based on the regulatory authority of Idaho's Air Quality Rules (IDAPA 58.01.01). We are concerned that the regulatory authority utilized to justify these exemptions may be out-of-date relative to more recent changes to federal regulations, particularly with regard to emissions from storage tanks containing volatile organic compounds (VOCs).

The EPA recently finalized regulatory actions that will curb the emissions of methane, smog-forming VOCs, and toxic air pollutants from oil and gas operations in an effort to reduce impacts from climate change and better protect public health. Included in these changes are requirements for facilities to assess emissions from previously unaccounted or omitted sources such as equipment leaks, pumps, and storage tanks.

IDAPA 58.01.01.317.01.b.i(3) of Idaho's Air Rules is referenced as the regulatory justification to exclude emissions from VOC storage tanks at this facility. A review of this section of the rules shows that this section was last changed in 1998, nearly 20 years ago. Given such a large time span, we are concerned that this section may not accurately reflect the ongoing federal changes that have occurred over the last 20 years. If there is a discrepancy, then Idaho's Air Rules and this permit should reflect the appropriate federal standard.

We are also concerned regarding the determination that surface coating operations that use less than two (2) gallons per day are insignificant. IDAPA 58.01.01.317.01.b.i(17) is listed as the justification for this determination; however this justification is incongruent with other surface coating permitting determinations made by DEQ.

With regards to surface coating operations, DEQ also issues air permits to automotive coating operations¹. For auto coating operations, DEQ allows facilities that use less than 1.25 gallons per day to be exempted from air permitting requirements. The exemption of these small-scale operations seems analogous to the insignificant determination made as part of this Tier 1 operating permit. Thus, we are confused over the discrepancy between utilized thresholds (1.25 gal/day vs. 2 gal/day). We recommend that DEQ utilize the lesser value of 1.25 gal/day as the threshold for determining the insignificance of surface coating activities at this facility in order to remain consistent across all permitting actions.

Considerations of Co-Contributing Sources

¹ <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/permitting/air-quality-permitting/permit-to-construct/automotive-coating-operations/>

This facility is primarily operated to generate electric power to meet peak system load requirements. According to IPC's website², the 2015 peak load occurred on June 30th. We assume that peak loads often occur throughout the summer months, and are concerned over the reliance on this system during times when other nearby co-contributing sources – including wildfires and harmful emissions from the nearby interstate and multiple gasoline stations – may also be at their peak.

We are curious if DEQ has assessed the potential cumulative impact of this facility operating simultaneously with other sources. If so, we are curious about the specific methods and findings of that analysis and any determinations made based upon it. If this type of analysis has yet to be performed, we encourage DEQ to assess these issues as part of the scope of this permit renewal.

² <https://www.idahopower.com/AboutUs/CompanyInformation/Facts/>