To: Division of Water Right

From: Jonathan Weight, EskDale Farm Manager

RE: Public Comment Snake Valley

Thank you for your visit to EskDale on September 26, to talk about the Snake Valley basin water challenges and water concerns, as this is an important and complicated issue.

We have been water right holders in Snake Valley since the early 1950's, and have watched the development of the underground and surface water, as well as a way of life for many who live and work on ranches and farms. In the late 90's was the beginning of what we now know as the start of a declining water table. From that time until now there has been may decisions made to be good stewards of this resource, but as it stands today we have water systems that can't maintain a minimum water flow to grow a productive crop. The real problem is the very thin aquafer that we have in the EskDale area, as of today there has been no water found deeper than our current well depths of about 125 feet where we generally run into a clay layer. The affect of a lowering water table is exaggerated in production loss due to our shallow aquafer. (this may not be the norm for most aquafers in the state) However a twenty-foot drawdown of our water table will drastically effect the production of our wells, with few options available to maintain production. Such as deepening wells or lowering pumps, which is the most common solution, this is very limited for us.

With this being our reality, it is with great reservation that we believe that the Snake Valley basin should be separated into four different sub-basins, and managed separately. Consideration should first be given to the water users in each sub-basin to work on a management plan first before the state water engineer's enforcement plan would take effect. The East zone on the map is of concern. The East sub-basin should not be separated from the West sub-basins. Each sub-basin should be contiguous East to West, to help prevent speculation from outside interests that there is available water to be appropriated based on the current annual water numbers for Snake Valley. There should be more discussion with the local water right holders' to establish these sub- basins. We would suggest that any plan be flexible to allow for weather pattern changes that may result in a significant recharge of the aquafer. We also see the need for further study of the annual water yield of the Snake Valley basin as the current numbers don't seem to match what we see avalible, in stream flows, surface water and ground water. If the decision is made to create separate sub-basins, a baseline should be established regarding the percentage of annual water yield that would or should be applied to each area.

My sincere appreciation for your consideration in this matter.