

IN THE SENATE

SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL NO. 104

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A JOINT MEMORIAL

TO THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, TO THE CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION REPRESENTING THE STATE OF IDAHO IN THE CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES, AND TO THE INCOMING DIRECTOR OF THE UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE.

We, your Memorialists, the Senate and the House of Representatives of the State of Idaho assembled in the First Regular Session of the Sixty-eighth Idaho Legislature, do hereby respectfully represent that:

WHEREAS, the Camas National Wildlife Refuge (Camas NWR) lies in southeast Idaho and contains approximately 11,000 acres of land managed by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and

WHEREAS, the Mud Lake Wildlife Management Area (Mud Lake WMA) is adjacent to the Camas NWR and contains approximately 11,500 acres of land managed by the Idaho Department of Fish and Game; and

WHEREAS, the Camas NWR is hydraulically connected to the Mud Lake WMA through Camas Creek, which flows through the Camas NWR, eventually ending in Mud Lake; and

WHEREAS, historically, Mud Lake was seasonally flooded when Camas Creek would overflow and create temporary wetlands, which would progressively recharge the aquifer lying underground; and

WHEREAS, currently, agricultural fields now occupy areas that were historically covered by seasonal wetlands; and

WHEREAS, such agricultural operations are dependent on valid, existing water rights to appropriate water from or near Mud Lake; and

WHEREAS, over the years, Camas Creek has become obstructed by willows and sedimentation building up such that water is not being properly delivered to the Mud Lake water users; and

WHEREAS, the federal permitting process to simply clean the Camas Creek is a slow, cumbersome process, which would further injure Idaho water right holders; and

WHEREAS, state permitting processes are much less onerous and time-consuming while achieving the same level of protection; and

WHEREAS, both the Camas NWR and the Mud Lake WMA are managed as wildlife sanctuaries for migratory and non-migratory birds and big and small game animals; and

WHEREAS, the Idaho Department of Fish and Game has successfully managed the Mud Lake WMA for decades, with the assistance of federal Pittman-Robertson wildlife restoration funds.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the First Regular Session of the Sixty-eighth Idaho Legislature, the Senate and the House of Representatives concurring therein, that the Legislature requests that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and any other federal agencies partaking in

1 the federal permitting process to clean Camas Creek, promptly process and
2 authorize the forthcoming permit application.

3 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature requests that the U.S. Fish
4 and Wildlife Service and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game work together
5 to transfer ownership and administration of the Camas National Wildlife
6 Refuge to the Idaho Department of Fish and Game for incorporation into the
7 Mud Lake Wildlife Management Area so that the entire area can be more effec-
8 tively and efficiently managed.

9 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Secretary of the Senate be, and she is
10 hereby authorized and directed to forward a copy of this Memorial to the
11 President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives of
12 Congress, to the congressional delegation representing the State of Idaho in
13 the Congress of the United States, and to the incoming director of the United
14 States Fish and Wildlife Service.