

South Columbia Basin Irrigation District (John O'Callaghan)

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John O'Callaghan Secretary/Manager
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The CBP is a highly efficient irrigation project from the perspective of water diverted relative to lands served due to the high level of recaptured and reused water, the primary exhibit of which is Potholes Reservoir. Occurring since the early years of CBP operations, the recapture and reuse of diverted water is, by design, fundamental to project operations.

The South Columbia Basin Irrigation District supports the proposed Columbia Basin Project Water Rights Policy and Interpretive Statement. CBP water rights are unique within the state of Washington. The policy clarifies and delineates which acres served by project deliveries are associated with the project water rights at the point of diversion from the Columbia River, and which are allowed by recapture and reuse of project water under project contracting authorities, the disposition of which was determined by the 1992 Washington Supreme Court ruling. The policy addresses the question of state water rights as opposed to district water contracts governed by the districts' repayment contracts with Reclamation. Further, the policy articulates Ecology's stance regarding the amended RCW 90.03.380(1)(b) after the passage of HB 1752 in 2024. The policy will assist the Districts with uses of the CBP's water supply as intended, clarifying the accounting of currently served acres as pertains to project water rights and the evaluation of future requests for project water.