



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Tuesday, April 14, 2015

**CONTACT:** Julia Bell  
202-226-9019

**Forest Service Groundwater Directive:  
Proposed, On Hold, Stopped**

*Bishop Commends Decision, Urges Service to Justify the Need for Any Future Groundwater Directive Before Moving Forward on "Solutions"*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Today, during delivered testimony before the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Water, Power and Oceans, the U.S. Forest Service Deputy Chief Leslie Weldon announced the decision **to permanently withdraw the Proposed Directive on Groundwater Management** (Groundwater Directive) that was put on the table last year. Chairman Rob Bishop (R-UT) issued the following statement in response:

*"The Forest Service's decision to pull the plug on the current Groundwater Directive is long overdue, and will finally put an end to the needless anxiety that this proposal caused. There was absolutely **no justification** for the Directive, and until that justification is made, there will be no Directive. State water management is primarily under the purview of the states and that's precisely where it should stay.*

*"I appreciate the Service taking our concerns about the motive of the program and the consequences of such an introduction seriously – and for making the right call."*

**Background:**

On March 26, at an Energy and Mineral Resources Subcommittee budget hearing, **Chairman Rob Bishop questioned FS Chief Tom Tidwell:** "May I suggest to you very carefully that because of the unanswered questions and the growing issues with this far reaching proposal that instead of a temporary hold, you simply withdraw it permanently?"

On March 12, House Committee on Natural Resources leaders **sent a letter** to Chief Tidwell, urging the agency to permanently withdraw the proposed directive. This letter echoed similar concerns voiced by the **Western Governors Association** and others about how the proposal could usurp state management of groundwater.

On February 26, 2015, Chief Tidwell announced the Proposed Directive on Groundwater Resource Management was put temporarily put on hold but that further action would be taken.

On May 7, 2014, the Forest Service published a Proposed Directive on Groundwater Resource Management available for public comment. The original comment period was for 90 days but after requests from the Committee and stakeholders, it was extended for two comment periods. It closed on October 3, 2014.

###