



March 18, 2024

Director Ms. Anderson,

The Idaho State Department of Education is firmly committed to supporting the Idaho Gem State Air Quality Initiative and its ongoing efforts to secure implementation grant funding through the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (CPRG) Program.

In communities with K-12 public schools, the need to replace coal furnaces and upgrade HVAC systems, including weatherization projects, is rather significant. Recently, the SDE conducted a survey, and over 60 local education agencies (LEAs) expressed interest in receiving funds. To determine which LEAs will receive funds, the SDE will develop a rubric to evaluate applications that are in alignment with the EPA's guidelines. Thus, ensuring the identification of those with the greatest needs receive funds.

If funded, the Idaho State Department of Education is confident in its ability to effectively manage and allocate these funds to qualifying LEAs while complying with the provided guidance. The SDE has a proven track record of managing federal funds appropriately. Currently, the SDE distributes nearly one billion dollars annually to Idaho Public Schools.

We endorse the efforts of the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality and trust that the EPA will thoroughly and impartially consider their application. Acquiring these funds will not only be highly beneficial for the LEAs but will also aid in job creation, lower energy costs for families, and improve air quality in our state.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Spencer J. Barzee".

Spencer Barzee  
Regional Director, Idaho Department of Education