

State Education Board Members,

If you would be so kind I'd ask that you take a moment out of your busy days to read what I have to say as a local business owner and what I feel is a fairly broad overview and understanding of the local Moscow economy and it's people.

It has long been know that the University of Idaho has had it share of challenges undergoing a period of decline and that calls for a turnaround which is exactly what Scott Green and this administration have done and are doing. However it's crucial that this revitalization doesn't come at the cost of our local businesses and cherished culture of Moscow. As a proud Vandal and native Idahoan I am and have been invested in the transformation of the University but this move to lease state land to a Juggernaut corporation like Home Depot is not the answer!

After thoroughly reviewing the lease agreement and the notes from Business Affairs, it's evident that this move isn't primarily aimed at significantly boosting the University's revenue. The outlined rent schedule appears to be a relatively minor financial consideration in the larger picture. It's clear that Home Depot has pledged additional funding or resources to the University, which isn't publicly disclosed. While I grasp the underlying reasons for the University's approach, it seems there might be a more appropriate way to handle this situation. The direction being pursued will almost certainly have unfavorable effects on Moscow, its local businesses, and the residents. These impacts might extend further than our current understanding. Is there a chance for a better-suited local or regional business to take up this lease? Such an arrangement could align better with our local economy and the interests of the community, all while still benefiting the University. Considering the University of Idaho's deep connection to its small college town origins, one would assume that preserving its roots and unique identity should be a priority. It's this distinctiveness that sets this University apart from some many others. Recognizing and respecting these roots should guide the University's decisions and ensure its continued special place within our community. As such, I'd ask that you consider the following;

Moscow, Idaho, and Pullman, Washington are two communities renowned for their local, diverse, and unique business environment. The community of Moscow invites you to experience what they have to offer and finding a reason to visit Pullman has never been difficult given the vibrant business community. To quote Buy Local Moscow, "It is crucial to the vibrancy of our community to get the word out about what our locally-owned businesses have to offer and about the role of independent business in the health and attractiveness of Moscow." Competition is healthy in that it drives down prices, improves product selection and ensures a wider variety of choices. This concept is not new to our local economy. Consider, for instance, successful businesses like Moscow & Pullman Building Supply, Spence Hardware, Early Bird Supply, Tristate, Howard Hughes Appliance, Pape Machinery, SYG Nursery, Mallory Paint, NRS, and Bennett Lumber, among others. This group of successful local businesses has not just added to the vibrancy, health and attractiveness of Moscow and Pullman but has consistently delivered outstanding value and customer satisfaction over the years. Beyond their core businesses, they've significantly supported local events and fundraisers, sponsored youth sports and 4-H clubs, contributed to the enhancement of local parks and recreation centers, and shown unwavering commitment to the broader community. This deep-rooted community involvement is a pivotal reason many proudly call the Palouse their home. In contrast stands The Home Depot, emblematic of what challenges our unique identity. They are an example of a yet another corporate machine that will only take their generated revenue and send it to their shareholders across the country — shareholders who care more about a profit and loss statement and not Moscow, Pullman and their surrounding communities and people. They almost certainly do not fully grasp our demographic, our Palousian identity, or the genuine needs of our broader community. As a local business owner whose legacy spans three generations of supporting local families and businesses, **it would be a disheartening oversight for the University of Idaho to contemplate such a partnership without first engaging the local businesses that have helped support the university in becoming what it is today.** One would hope that the University of Idaho would prioritize conversations with local businesses to discuss how they could enter into a mutually beneficial collaboration before looking to The Home Depot or other external business partners. As it stands, this proposed partnership seems tilted in favor of the University, potentially at the expense of local businesses. **While competition is good and healthy for any business big or small, introducing a juggernaut like The Home Depot greatly risks damaging the diverse and vibrant community that we all know and love.**

As you contemplate this matter, I urge you to understand that my voice echoes not only the sentiments of Moscow & Pullman Building Supply but also the wider network of businesses that could be adversely affected by endorsing the land lease to Home Depot. I sincerely appreciate your time and thoughtful consideration. I hope you arrive at a decision that aligns not only with the University of Idaho's interests but also with the greater Moscow community and the well-being of Idaho as a whole.

Tyler Garrett

"I endorse the preceding letter and its sentiment towards the University of Idaho's proposed land lease towards Home Depot."



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If you agree with this statement, please complete the bottom portion of this letter and email to board@osbe.idaho.gov ASAP

Name (First & Last): _____ **Date:** _____

Business Affiliate (If Applicable): _____

By signing this letter, I hereby recognize and agree with the statement above.