

MINUTES
SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 25, 2021

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice Chairman Bayer, Senators Siddoway (Burtenshaw), Patrick, Den Hartog, Johnson, Ricks, Nelson, and Rabe

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Zito

NOTE: The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the committee's office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

CONVENED: **Vice Chairman Bayer** called the meeting of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee (Committee) to order at 8:02 a.m.

H 64 **Relating to Veterinary Medicine.** **Tim Frost**, Regulatory Affairs Manager, Idaho Division of Occupational and Professional Licenses (DOPL), introduced himself; and indicated the presence of Jeremy Brown, Executive Director, Idaho Board of Veterinary Medicine (BOVM), to answer questions from the Committee. He advised the Committee that BOVM is presently under the Health Profession Section of DOPL. **Mr. Frost** stated **H 64** updates the veterinary medicine practice act in Idaho Code Chapter 21, Title 54. He detailed all the proposed changes in the Idaho Code. He also spoke about the minor reduction in DOPL's dedicated fund as a result of the elimination of the temporary permit.

In conclusion, **Mr. Frost** said **H 64** sought to simplify the Veterinary Practice Act, streamlined its licensing procedures, and was the result of a two-year team effort between DOPL, stakeholders, and related organizations. Moreover, he said that the bill is supported by the Idaho Veterinary Medical Association.

DISCUSSION: **Vice Chairman Bayer** questioned the removal of statute of limitations from the above-mentioned Idaho Code. **Mr. Frost** explained the deletion of the statute of limitation ensures the alignment of BOVM with all other Boards under DOPL. However, he pointed out that, in the future, if the Idaho Legislature puts the statute of limitation into the Idaho Code, DOPL would comply and apply the statute across all its Boards.

In response to questions from Senator Siddoway, **Mr. Frost** emphasized that the focal point of **H 64** is the restructuring of the licensing process. Currently, the statute limits BOVM's ability to issue licenses to specific time periods. Consequently, temporary permits were issued to applicants who applied past the allowed licensing time periods. **H 64** removes the issuance of temporary permits to applicants and allows BOVM to issue licenses upon application completion. He stressed that the bill does not require BOVM members to come together every time there is an application to be reviewed, although it allows BOVM personnel to start issuing applications based on the new licensing structure. BOVM members and personnel are working together to bring into agreement all the requirements and expectations for every application. He emphasized that the members will still review all issued licenses in their quarterly meetings.

Senator Patrick asked Mr. Frost to elaborate on the reduction in dedicated funds and the savings on not spending extra time issuing temporary permits. **Mr. Frost** acknowledged that, over time, BOVM will see administrative savings by not having to go through the same process twice.

MOTION: **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send **H 64** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Siddoway** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Den Hartog** expressed her appreciation to DOPL for their efforts in cutting down the licensure process.

PRESENTATION: **Idaho Oilseed Commission (IOC) Annual Report.** **Benjamin Kelly**, IOC, started his presentation with an overview of IOC's members and mission. He specified that IOC's main goal is research. IOC is also involved in some outreach programs to growers and the community. Furthermore, he discussed IOC research projects in 2020 such as Flea Beetle - Spring Canola research and Growth Regulators for mustards. He pointed out that half of research funds goes toward safflower and mustard seeds studies while the other half goes toward canola seeds studies.

DISCUSSION: **Vice Chairman Bayer** asked Mr. Kelly about the presence of processing plants in Idaho as well as the process of transforming canola seeds to oil. **Mr. Kelly** replied that Idaho has no canola seeds processing and production plants. He went through the process of converting oilseeds to oil.

PRESENTATION: **Idaho Mint Commission (IMC) Annual Report.** **Roger Batt**, IMC, spoke about Idaho's mint industry and IMC's history, board members, and mission. He corrected that the Idaho Mint Industry Act was enacted in 1969, not 1986, as shown in Attachment 1. He emphasized Idaho ranks first in peppermint production and third in spearmint production. This is due to Idaho's dry climate and ability to get irrigation water from reservoirs to farmlands. He also cited diseases and pests common in Idaho that greatly affect mint growers. **Mr. Batt** informed the Committee that IMC is in partnership with University of Idaho to combat diseases and pests through their research programs.

Mr. Batt recounted the production figures of peppermint and spearmint in the last 20 years and also discussed the impact of COVID-19 to the Idaho mint industry's production and sales. Additionally, he further discussed the expectations and future of Idaho's mint industry on the domestic level. (See Attachment 2.)

Mr. Batt informed the Committee that IMC passed its 2019-2020 audit. In closing, he noted that most of the mint crops are produced around the latitude that is 42 degrees north of the Earth's equatorial plane or 42nd parallel north due to the climate in the region. For this reason, only seven states in the U.S. produce mint.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Patrick** inquired about the storage life of mint oil in a barrel. **Mr. Batt** stated that mint oil starts to oxidize after 7 years, and it takes 15 years to be fully oxidized.

In response to Senator Nelson's query, **Mr. Batt** responded that there are 21 mint stills and 73 mint growers in the State.

PRESENTATION: **Idaho Grape Growers and Wine Producers Commission (IWC) Annual Report.** **Moya Dolsby**, Executive Director, IWC, commenced her presentation by introducing IWC's members, staff, mission, and a brief history of wine in Idaho. (See Attachment 3.) She emphasized that the Idaho wine industry is steadily growing. The State's soil, climate, elevation, and seasons account for the industry's growth and quality wine production, **Ms. Dolsby** said.

Ms. Dolsby explained IWC's initiatives and programs in 2020. She highlighted that the wine industry learned to pivot through the pandemic. Financially, she pointed out that IWC's budget decreased due to the inability to host in-person large events. This decrease resulted in a reduction of staff and the working hours for the remaining personnel. On the positive note, she affirmed that most of IWC's events in 2020 took place virtually, which allowed IWC to reach the entire State with its projects, trainings, and workshops. She emphasized that IWC shifted its focus on creating educational opportunities for its members through grant funding.

Lastly, **Ms. Dolsby** broke down its 2020 budget, marketing strategies, and its upcoming legislation relating to excise tax legislation. (See Attachment 4.)

DISCUSSION:

Senator Siddoway asked if Idaho grape growers are eligible to receive COVID-19 relief funding from the federal government, particularly the Paycheck Protection Program. **Ms. Dolsby** answered yes.

ADJOURNED:

There being no further business at this time, **Vice Chairman Bayer** adjourned the meeting at 9:09 a.m.

Senator Regina Bayer
Vice Chair

Rellie Wisdom
Secretary