

MINUTES

## HOUSE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

**DATE:** Monday, February 28, 2022

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW41

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Ehardt, Vice Chairman Wisniewski, Representatives Vander Woude, Horman, Scott, Amador, Armstrong, Furniss, Hartgen, Lickley, Young, Adams, Yamamoto, Chew, Necochea, Nash

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Rep. Vander Woude, Adams

**GUESTS:** The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of the session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

**Chairman Ehardt** called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Yamamoto** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 16, 2022, meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**Lisa Kuscu**, Geologist and President of Blackrock Geoscience introduced herself and her colleagues who would be presenting. **Dr. Roy Mink**, President of Mink GeoHydro and **Wendolyn Holland**, President of Holland Consulting introduced themselves and discussed their experiences.

**Ms. Holland** discussed the purposes of the Idaho Geothermal Alliance. The focus of the alliance is to consolidate and update a geothermal database, and to help the development of geothermal energy in direct use electricity for municipalities, industries, agriculture and tribes. The alliance is also working to leverage creative financial and tax structures to support geothermal development.

**Dr. Mink** discussed the history of geothermal development in Idaho. He went over systems that use geothermal energy including: the City of Boise's District Heating System, Idaho Greenhouses and Aquaculture, the Raft River Power Plant, and the Cascade School District.

**Ms. Kuscu** explained why geothermal development is important to Idaho. The Snake River Plain is one of the largest heat flow anomalies in the United States. Geothermal development provides energy security, helps with power during drought conditions, and reduces dependence on fossil fuels. Currently geothermal accounts for less than 1% Idaho's net energy generation. Ms. Kuscu expressed concern the lack of financing is holding back a handful of active geothermal exploration projects. Grant opportunities are non-existent for exploratory methods in geothermal exploration. Ms. Kuscu explained the cost versus risk stages of geothermal development. She expressed the need for state funding to support resource development, and state help to update a geothermal database for Idaho.

In answer to committee questions. **Ms. Kuscu** talked about the best locations in Idaho for geothermal development. She described the process of development and what temperatures and conditions need to exist for geothermal development. In answer to questions, she confirmed a new market is developing to help data centers use the heat produced to harness geothermal energy for electricity. She confirmed private landowners work with investors in geothermal development. She clarified that one of her jobs is to do financial and technical feasibility studies to help in the development process.

Responding to committee questions, **Dr. Mink** clarified the Raft River plant does sell geothermal power to Idaho Power. He also confirmed technology has evolved to allow for lower heats to draw electricity. Dr. Mink went over the ways geothermal leases work in Idaho, and when they are categorized as water rights or mineral rights.

Committee members expressed concerns if the state isn't involved in mineral exploration, to be consistent, state government shouldn't be involved in geothermal exploration.

**Ms. Holland** discussed their hope for state government involvement. Developing Idaho's geothermal energy would help Idaho develop better energy independence.

In answer to concerns, **Ms. Holland** pointed out each project is different, and where appropriate, federal funding and grants are being used. She restated that support from state government could help propel geothermal development in Idaho.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:37 p.m.

---

Representative Ehardt  
Chair

---

Maggie Price  
Secretary