

IN THE SENATE

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 116

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

STATING FINDINGS OF THE LEGISLATURE AND REQUESTING THAT THE JOINT LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE DIRECT THE OFFICE OF PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS TO MANAGE AN INDEPENDENT EVALUATION REGARDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A COUNTYWIDE HIGHWAY DISTRICT SYSTEM AND THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL HIGHWAY TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE COUNCIL.

Be It Resolved by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

WHEREAS, Idaho Code currently provides for the administration of local highways by counties, cities, voter-approved countywide highway districts, and highway districts comprising areas smaller than the boundary of a single county; and

WHEREAS, Idaho has nearly three hundred unique local highway jurisdictions, including cities, counties, and highway districts; and

WHEREAS, some Idaho counties have no highway districts, while others contain several small highway districts within their boundaries; and

WHEREAS, several of Idaho's highway districts were formed over one hundred years ago; and

WHEREAS, many components of Idaho's current system of secondary highway administration may have evolved over time; and

WHEREAS, technology has advanced considerably since the development of Idaho's system of secondary highway administration; and

WHEREAS, Idaho's weather, terrain, and remote regions present unique challenges that must be addressed; and

WHEREAS, the majority of highway miles and bridges in Idaho are administered by local highway jurisdictions; and

WHEREAS, the Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC) was established under Chapter 24, Title 40, Idaho Code, by the Idaho Legislature in 1994; and

WHEREAS, the mission of LHTAC is to help Idaho's local highway jurisdictions utilize the available resources for maintenance and construction of Idaho's local highway system in the most efficient and effective manner possible; and

WHEREAS, LHTAC has been granted the authority to act for local jurisdictions, including the execution of contracts and the expenditure of funds; and

WHEREAS, LHTAC has administered state transportation funds, including Strategic Initiatives Program funds, to local highway jurisdictions through grant programs; and

WHEREAS, through its role as a resource for local highway jurisdictions, LHTAC has collected and published data regarding Idaho's local highway system; and

1           WHEREAS, according to a 2014 study by LHTAC, the local transportation  
2 system has 33,276 miles of roadways with 13% in fair condition and 27% in poor  
3 condition; and

4           WHEREAS, according to 2019 data collected by LHTAC, Idaho's local high-  
5 way system contains 2,417 bridges, 857 of which are at least fifty years old,  
6 362 of which are load posted or closed, and 181 of which are in poor condi-  
7 tion; and

8           WHEREAS, repair, replacement, and construction of local highway infra-  
9 structure is critical to public safety; and

10          WHEREAS, Idaho's transportation funding shortfall complicates the re-  
11 pair, replacement, and construction of highway infrastructure; and

12          WHEREAS, the Legislature desires to learn more about the efficiencies  
13 that could be gained through implementation of a countywide approach to lo-  
14 cal highway administration; and

15          WHEREAS, the Legislature further desires to learn more about LHTAC, its  
16 current role with respect to the local highway system, how LHTAC may be best  
17 utilized in the future, and whether, and to what extent, the implementation  
18 of a countywide highway system would enhance or minimize LHTAC's role as a  
19 resource for such countywide jurisdictions; and

20          WHEREAS, the Legislature has the responsibility to ensure that all re-  
21 sources of the State of Idaho are expended as efficiently as possible.

22          NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the First Regular  
23 Session of the Sixty-fifth Idaho Legislature, the Senate and the House of  
24 Representatives concurring therein, that the Joint Legislative Oversight  
25 Committee is requested to direct the Office of Performance Evaluations to  
26 manage an independent evaluation of efficiencies that could be obtained  
27 through implementation of a countywide approach to local highway admin-  
28 istration throughout Idaho, including analysis of LHTAC's role. Such  
29 evaluation shall be conducted by a qualified out-of-state consultant or  
30 consultants without current contractual relationships with any Idaho polit-  
31 ical subdivisions, local highway jurisdictions, the Idaho Transportation  
32 Department, LHTAC, or any consultant or contractor who works for or with any  
33 of the aforementioned individuals or entities. The evaluation shall, at a  
34 minimum, address the following:

35           (1) Whether cost-efficiencies and enhancements to public safety could  
36 be gained through implementation of a countywide approach to secondary high-  
37 way administration, including the consolidation of local highway jurisdic-  
38 tions;

39           (2) Whether Idaho's transportation system would benefit from or suffer  
40 any adverse consequences as a result of a countywide approach to local high-  
41 way administration;

42           (3) Whether, on balance, the benefits that could be obtained through  
43 implementation of a countywide approach to secondary highway administra-  
44 tion, including the consolidation of local highway districts into single  
45 countywide highway districts, would outweigh any adverse effects; and

46           (4) LHTAC's current role with respect to local highway administration  
47 and whether, and to what extent, the implementation of a countywide highway  
48 system should enhance or minimize LHTAC's role.

1 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the independent evaluation shall appro-  
2 priately address Idaho's unique weather, terrain, size, and many remote  
3 regions.

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee  
5 is requested to direct the Office of Performance Evaluations to develop and  
6 submit a report to the Legislature regarding the findings of the evaluation  
7 no later than the First Regular Session of the Sixty-sixth Idaho Legisla-  
8 ture. At the conclusion of the consultant's work, the Joint Legislative  
9 Oversight Committee is requested to submit the completed results of the  
10 independent evaluation to the Legislature. The results so reported are to  
11 include action-item recommendations upon which the Legislature can act to  
12 improve local highway administration.