

MINUTES
JOINT FINANCE-APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, January 25, 2024

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room C310

MEMBERS PRESENT: Senators Co-Chairman Grow, Bjerke, Burtenshaw, Lent, Cook, VanOrden, Adams, Herndon and Ward-Engelking

Representatives Co-Chairman Horman, Miller, Bundy, Raybould, Furniss, Handy, Lambert, Petzke, Tanner and Green

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Senator Just

CONVENED: **Co-Chairman Grow** called the meeting of the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (Committee) to order at 8:00 a.m.

LSO STAFF PRESENTATION: **FOREST UTILIZATION RESEARCH (FUR), LBB 1-113 (SPECIAL PROGRAMS) Keith Bybee, Division Manager, Legislative Services Office (LSO), Budget & Policy Analysis**

Mr. Bybee provided a base review for FUR, including its mission statement, organizational structure, and budget details (see, attachment 1). Organized within the University of Idaho's College of Natural Resources, it has the statutory duty to institute and conduct investigation and research into the forestry, wildlife and range problems of Idaho and work to increase the productivity of Idaho's forests and rangelands. He outlined full time personnel (FTP) count and provided detail on Fiscal Year (FY) 20 – FY 24 appropriations and expenditures, FY 23 expenditures broken out by percentages, a five-year base snapshot for FY 20 – FY 24, the FY 24 Wildland Fire Center budget enhancement, and the FY 25 budget request for a new administrative assistant to assist FUR faculty located in the Boise area.

DISCUSSION: **Dr. Dennis Becker, Dean, College of Natural Resources, University of Idaho** stood for questions before the Committee. In response to a question from **Senator Herndon**, he stated an additional FTP is necessary in Boise to assist with the increased grant and contract work resulting from the Wildland Fire Center and Mica Creek Watershed projects. In response to a question from **Senator Bjerke** asking for further detail on money spent on the Wildland Fire Center, he stated funds were used for an additional faculty member to oversee the fire coordination efforts between state, federal and local authorities, and to be a resource for various agencies and landowners.

LSO STAFF PRESENTATION: IDAHO GEOLOGICAL SURVEY (IGS), LBB 1-113 (SPECIAL PROGRAMS) Keith Bybee, Division Manager, LSO, Budget & Policy Analysis

Mr. Bybee provided a base review for IGS including mission statement and budget details (see, attachment 2). IGS is responsible for the collection, interpretation, and dissemination of geologic and mineral data for Idaho and fulfills its mission through applied geologic research and collaborations with federal and state agencies, academia, the private sector, and the public. Mr. Bybee outlined FTP count and provided a breakout of state appropriated FTP versus external funded FTP. He outlined five-year appropriations and expenditures showing a FY 20 budget of \$1.1 million and FY 24 budget of \$1.29 million. He reported FY 23 allocation versus expenditures, which shows the majority of state allocation going toward personnel. For FY 23, 54% of total expenditures were state appropriation while 46% were IGS generated. The five-year base snapshot showed how the base has grown over time, from \$1.08 million base appropriation in FY 20 to \$1.23 million base appropriation in FY 24. He pointed out the 2% budget reduction for FY 21 that applied to all state agencies. He outlined FY 23 and FY 24 budget enhancements, and the FY 25 budget enhancement request of \$18,200 for a new database manager.

DISCUSSION: In response to a question from **Senator Cook** regarding the FY 25 budget request for a database manager, **Mr. Bybee** stated IGS is seeking state funds for the database manager position, a position that already exists but has been previously funded through a Idaho Department of Lands grant. It is a request for only part of the FTP and positions full salary due to a 3% limitation on funding requests from the executive branch.

Dr. Claudio Berti, IGS Director and State Geologist stood before the Committee to answer questions. In response to a question from **Representative Raybould** about how the total cost of the database manager position will be funded after FY 25, he stated his office is looking into other sources of funding including other agency collaborations as the position is key to the IGS mission. In response to a question from **Senator VanOrden** about how IGS generates income, **Dr. Berti** stated that in addition to appropriations, IGS funds are generated primarily through federal grants from the United States Geological Survey, FEMA, the Department of Energy, as well as state agencies including the Department of Water Resources. In response to a question from **Senator Herndon** about whether the FY 24 budget enhancement for salary retention, **Dr. Berti** stated the funds were effective in retaining staff. In addition, the work of IGS is rigorous science and IGS would like to secure additional funding to establish continuity in the database manager position. In response to a question from **Senator Herndon**, he stated that FTP is a workforce measurement and the Governor has the authority to increase the FTP cap.

LSO STAFF PRESENTATION: OFFICE OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANTS, LBB 1-113 (Special Programs) Keith Bybee, Division Manager, LSO, Budget & Policy Analysis

Mr. Bybee provided a base review for the State Board of Education Scholarships and Grants Special Program, which administers four scholarship and grant programs including Idaho Work Study Program, Armed Forces and Public Safety Officer Scholarship, Opportunity Scholarship, and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness Undergraduate Program (GEARUP) federal scholarships. He provided an organizational chart for Special Programs, FTP and budget detail (see, attachment 3) including five-year appropriations and expenditures for FY 20 – FY 24 showing 85%-95% of total appropriations expended each year, FY 23 expenditures showing \$24 million going out in scholarships and grants, a five-year base snapshot for FY 20 – FY 24, budget enhancement amounts for FY 23 and FY 24, and a FY 25 budget request of \$749,600 for Rural Educator Incentive Program Funding. In 2023 Senate Bill 1290 created the Rural Educator Incentive Program for educators working in high need or rural school districts or charter schools. The FY 24 budget was \$29,797,800.

DISCUSSION: **Scott Greco, Deputy Director, Office of the State Board of Education** stood before the Committee to answer questions. In response to a question from **Co-Chairman Horman** regarding how much of the Rural Educator Incentive funding has been expended and how many teachers it is supporting, he stated that in the first cohort of 500 teachers, 447 remain in that cohort. In response to a question from **Senator Ward-Engelking**, he stated that the amount of recipients for the Rural Educator Incentive Program funding is capped at 250 per year and there are more applicants than spots available.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business before the Committee, Co-Chairman Grow adjourned the meeting at 9:02 a.m. no JFAC tomorrow.

Senator Grow
Chair

Linsy Heiner
Secretary