

MINUTES
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, January 23, 2024

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Okuniewicz, Vice Chairman Den Hartog, Senators Hart, Carlson, Toews, Trakel, Stinson (Rabe), Just

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Winder

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: **Chairman Okuniewicz** called the meeting of the Senate Transportation Committee (Committee) to order at 1:30 p.m.

S 1216 **DRIVER'S LICENSES - Amends existing law to provide that a driver's license shall be revoked or canceled under certain circumstances.** **Senator Herndon** stated the legislation stipulated that individuals within 14 specified categories would not be issued driver's licenses. If a license was mistakenly issued to someone in these prohibited categories, the Department of Transportation had the authority to revoke or cancel the license. **Senator Herndon** stated the change would be to replace "may" with "shall" in the wording of **Section 49-303** and would align with the wording in **Section 49-322** of Idaho code. The change aimed to align the statute with current practices and the original intent by mandating the department to revoke all licenses issued to individuals in the prohibited categories.

MOTION: **Senator Hart** moved to send **S 1216** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Toews** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

AGENCY UPDATE: **2024 Report from the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). Scott Stokes, Director, ITD**, introduced himself and shared the department's annual report of fiscal years 2023 and 2024. This presentation included the Governor's Recommendations for fiscal year 2025. The department's vision was to enhance quality of life through transportation (Attachment 1).

DISCUSSION: **Senator Hart** asked if a project still took about 14 years to complete. **Mr. Stokes** stated project time lines had become shorter due to the help of the Transportation Expansion and Congestion Mitigation (TECM) program which assisted in getting environmental documentation completed quickly.

Senator Hart asked **Mr. Stokes** for insight of the planning of the North South bypass of Coeur d' Alene. **Mr. Stokes** reported the study had expanded to include US 95, Highway 41, Highway 53, and Interstate 90. Huetter route was also included in the study which would take more time to research all options.

Vice Chair Den Hartog asked how ITD prioritized repairing damaged guardrails. **Mr. Stokes** stated that maintenance-type functions could not be kept up with due to the reduction in manpower. **Mr. Stokes** also stated the department had been setting aside extra funding to contract for maintenance -type functions for some counties.

Vice Chair Den Hartog asked **Mr. Stokes** to provide an explanation to what the county assessors would be doing in the future to provide support to the Department of Motor and Vehicle Services (DMV) in their area. **Mr. Stokes** reported all mail and internet transactions bypassed the county offices going directly to ITD. There was a team working on ways to help with county (DMV) services going forward.

**GUBERNATORIAL
APPOINTMENT
VOTE:**

Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Appointment of James Hoff of Idaho Falls, Idaho to the Aeronautics Advisory Board to serve a term commencing April 1, 2023 and expiring January 31, 2028. **Senator Den Hartog** moved to send Gubernatorial appointment of James Hoff to the Aeronautics Advisory Board to the floor with the recommendation that they be confirmed by the Senate. **Senator Rabe** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**GUBERNATORIAL
APPOINTMENT:**

Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Appointment of Mitchell Watkins of Twin Falls, Idaho to the Idaho Transportation Board to serve a term commencing January 31, 2024 and expiring January 31, 2030. **Mr. Watkins** introduced himself to the committee and provided details on his business background owning a distribution company. The company distributed beer, wine, and soft drinks to thousands of retail outlets and stores across the State of Idaho. **Mr. Watkins** also stated he operated over 150 trucks, vans, and vehicles on a daily basis and felt he could represent businesses and the general public in issues regarding Idaho roadway systems.

DISCUSSION:

Chairman Okuniewicz asked **Mr. Watkins** why he chose this board to serve on. **Mr. Watkins** responded his primary knowledge was to move products from point A to point B on Idaho roads. **Senator Toews** asked **Mr. Watkins** how his goals and values aligned with his position as a Board Member of the Rebound Idaho organization. **Mr. Watkins** stated he was a part of the organization post-Covid in an effort to assist small businesses after the economy shut down. **Chairman Okuniewicz** asked if **Mr. Watkins** was still a member of that Board. **Mr. Watkins** stated he was no longer a Board member.

ADJOURNED:

There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Okuniewicz** adjourned the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

Senator Okuniewicz
Chair

Alicia Fowler-Rynearson
Secretary