

PROGRESS REPORT

Natural Resource Interim Committee HCR 12 (2007)

Members of the Committee:

Senator Gary Schroeder, Co-chair
Senator Brad Little
Senator Chuck Coiner
Senator Clint Stennett
Senator Jeff Siddoway

Representative Dell Raybould, Co-chair
Representative Bert Stevenson
Representative Scott Bedke
Representative Mike Moyle
Representative Donna Pence

Ad Hoc Members of the Committee:

Senator Steven Bair
Senator Lee Heinrich
Senator Dean Cameron
Representative JoAn Wood
Representative Jim Patrick
Representative Jim Clark

Staff: Katharine Gerrity, Toni Hobbs, Ray Houston

Table of Contents

	<u>Page No.</u>
Charge	1
Meetings	2
Scope of Study and Recommendations	2
Speakers	3

NATURAL RESOURCES INTERIM COMMITTEE

2007

PROGRESS REPORT

Charge

The Natural Resources Interim Committee is a two-year committee formed in 2007 pursuant to the authority of HCR 12. The resolution authorized the Committee to undertake and complete a study of various natural resource issues in the state, including continued study and evaluation of ways to stabilize the water distribution system in Idaho. The Committee was directed to make a progress report to the Second Regular Session of the Fifty-ninth Idaho Legislature.

Meetings

The Committee met in Boise on June 12, 2007 and on October 23, 2007.

Scope of Study and Recommendations

The Natural Resources Interim Committee conducted its first meeting of the interim in Boise on June 12, 2007. During the June meeting, committee members received an update from Dave Tuthill, Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources, relating to the implementation of conjunctive administration in aquifers throughout the State of Idaho. The Director told the Committee that Idaho is in yet another drought year and that reservoirs did not fill as expected due to a very dry month of May. The Director then addressed the various aquifers throughout the state, including those located in the Rathdrum Prairie, Moscow-Pullman, the Treasure Valley/Lower Boise River Basin, Mountain Home, Big Wood, Big Lost, Bear River and the Eastern Snake Plain. He noted the current understanding of each particular region as well as unique concerns relating to each aquifer. The Committee also heard from Clive Strong, Division Chief, Natural Resources Division, Idaho Attorney General's Office, regarding litigation involving conjunctive administration of surface and ground water rights in the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer. The Attorney General's Office also presented an overview in regard to litigation involving Idaho Power and the state. During the course of the meeting, the Committee voted to make a recommendation to the Governor to include in the budget the creation of a fund in the Idaho Department of Water Resources for the management and administration of Idaho aquifers to be funded out of the general fund.

During the meeting in October, Committee members received reports relating to projected costs of the Idaho Department of Water Resources in regard to the funding of aquifer management throughout the state. During the meeting, the Committee voted to recommend to the germane committees repeal of Section 42-620, Idaho Code, which presently provides for costs of the Department for administration of water rights on the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer, and enactment of a statute that would accomplish a statewide administration and study of all aquifers. In addition, the Committee voted to recommend that the Legislature support the budget request of the Idaho Department of Water Resources for the study of aquifer management throughout the state.

Speakers

The following is a list of people, groups or agencies that testified or provided comments during one or more of the Committee meetings:

Natural Resources Division, Idaho Attorney General's Office

Mr. Clive Strong, Division Chief

Mr. Karl Klein

Idaho Department of Water Resources

Director Dave Tuthill

Mr. Hal Anderson

Mr. Brian Patton

Bonneville Power Administration

Mr. John Williams