

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

### RS19512

This proposal is an outgrowth of the work of Natural Resources Interim Committee. HCR18, passed in 2009, requested that the interim committee study the impacts of the conversion of working ranches, farms and forests to other uses. The interim committee examined the need for new state policy initiatives to protect the values that such lands contribute to local economies, agricultural heritage, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. As a result of these discussions, RS 19512 is proposed to establish the working lands fund in the state treasury. The purpose of this fund is to protect and enhance the benefits that working lands provide to all Idahoans. The fund is authorized to receive future legislative appropriations, private donations and other contributions. The fund shall be administered by the working lands fund committee composed of nine members appointed by the governor. The fund shall be used to support grants that provide voluntary incentives to landowners and project sponsors for natural resources stewardship, protection and enhancements habitat and recreation opportunities. Such grants are intended to complement the land conservation and stewardship programs of state natural resources agencies by, among other things, assisting such agencies and public organizations in meeting match requirements.

### FISCAL NOTE

This legislation does not appropriate general fund moneys to the working lands fund. Office of Species Conservation will house the working lands committee that oversees the fund. A percentage of the moneys accruing to the working lands fund in the future may be used to defray administrative costs.

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