

November 2, 2011

Interim Committee on Energy, Environment and Technology

Re: Comments on Proposed Revisions to 2007 Idaho Energy Plan

Dear Committee Members:

As Idaho's statewide transportation association, CTAI's mission is to advocate for and empower individuals and communities to develop transportation systems they need for economic vitality and quality of life. Improving transportation options in Idaho communities is one way to limit the expected increase in energy consumption in the future years and must be part of the energy efficiencies and fuel conservation measures promoted in Idaho.

To that end, CTAI highly encourages the Committee to incorporate the following comments when revising the draft 2012 Idaho Energy Plan submitted by the Idaho Strategic Energy Alliance:

### Petroleum and Transportation Fuels

**Action T-1:** The Committee should restore "natural gas" language to this action item to ensure that state procurement rules continue to promote purchases of natural gas vehicles in addition to high-efficiency and alternative-fuel vehicles. Natural gas facilities are being constructed in Idaho meaning the use of natural gas vehicles is even more feasible for state agencies and therefore procurement of "natural gas" vehicles by the state should be included in the 2012 Idaho Energy Plan.

**Actions T-2 and T-3:** The Committee should restore "incentives" language which was overwhelmingly approved by the 2007 Legislature. Striking "incentives" and replacing it with "encourage" will likely result in reduced purchases of efficient, flex-fuel and alternative fuel vehicles and thus not limit the expected increase in energy consumption in future years. In order to reinforce the best energy-saving practices and make financial sense for many businesses, including public transportation agencies, offering incentive packages is a sensible way to drive the market toward meeting energy efficiency goals.

### Transportation Fuel Conservation

**Action T-8:** This item should not be deleted in the 2012 Idaho Energy Plan. Idaho should definitely permit local authorization of transit option taxes to support the use and expansion of public transportation. Improving public transportation options throughout Idaho will greatly decrease transportation fuel consumption in the coming years. With no dedicated state funding for public transportation, local option sales tax is one tool which communities in Idaho would utilize to improve their transportation options and reduce their fuel consumption. For example, the city of Ponderay utilized their resort city sales tax authority to bring in revenue to implement a transportation system that connects four communities in Northern Idaho. It was passed overwhelmingly by the voters and provided more than 4,000 rides during its first month of operations. Think of the transportation fuel that would have been consumed had this critical transportation service not been available in this community. And, this is possible because this community has authority to implement a sales tax.

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Local option sales tax was also one of the funding recommendations made by the Governor's Task Force for Modernizing Transportation Funding in 2010. It would seem highly counterproductive for one statewide committee to be striking a recommendation that was made by another statewide committee.

Additionally, on page 20 of the draft 2012 Idaho Energy Plan the Idaho Strategic Energy Alliance actually recommends "encouraging public transportation where practical".

Public transportation is practical in all communities in Idaho and can play a critical role in Idaho's energy plan. In increasing numbers, people are using public transportation and local communities' desire new and/or expanded public transit services. Every segment of Idaho society – individuals, families, communities, and businesses – benefits from public transportation. Why limit the authority communities could have to implement transportation options they desire and will decrease transportation fuel consumption?

**Action T-8** should remain in the 2012 Idaho Energy Plan.

**Action T-10:** This item should not be deleted in the 2012 Idaho Energy Plan. It is well documented that energy consumption in Idaho is expected to increase substantially as our population and economic activity increases. Therefore, measures to reduce Idaho's energy consumption need to be included in the 2012 Idaho Energy Plan. One promising means for reducing transportation fuel demand is integrating transportation planning into land use planning. For example, improved land use planning can reduce the number and length of automobile trips and improve travel via transit and non-motor mobility options. The net result would be fewer vehicle miles traveled in the state and reduced fuel demand. Idaho should encourage regional land use planning and policies that minimize vehicle miles traveled. Action T-10 should remain in the 2012 Idaho Energy Plan.

CTAI highly encourages the Committee to be progressive and forward-thinking and ensure alternative transportation options are a part of the energy efficiencies and fuel conservation measures promoted in Idaho. CTAI is happy to assist and participate in any level of the Legislature's efforts in the drafting of the 2012 Idaho Energy Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



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