

## MINUTES

# HOUSE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Thursday, February 14, 2013
- TIME:** 1:30 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room EW41
- MEMBERS:** Chairman Raybould, Vice Chairman Eskridge, Representatives Anderson(1), Hartgen, Vander Woude, DeMordaunt, Nielsen, Thompson, Anderson(31), Anderst, Mendive, Monks, Morse, Trujillo, Smith, Rusche, Woodings
- ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Rep. Vander Woude
- GUESTS:** Teri Murrison, Noman Wright, and Jan Webster, Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission; Brenda Tominaga, Idaho Rural Water Association; Tana Cory, Linda Livengood, Nancy Lyles, and Mary Miles, Bureau of Occupational Licenses; Barry Burnell, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Bret Rumbleck, Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts
- Chairman Raybould** called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.
- RS 22028:** **Tana Cory**, Bureau of Occupational Licenses, presented **RS 22028**. This legislation will allow the Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals to charge less than the set examination fee in order to ensure that the cost of online and written exams are equal. Ms. Cory explained the fee is currently \$37 for written exams, and \$39 for online exams. This difference causes problems and delays in applicant status, and they are requesting the same \$37 fee for both exams.
- MOTION:** **Rep. Morse** made a motion to introduce **RS 22028**.
- In response to questions from the committee regarding the service that provides the exam, **Barry Burnell**, Department of Environmental Quality, explained ABC is their certification board. He stated they administer exams for licensure for approximately 40 states, they are a non profit business, and they only charge what their costs are. He explained the terms of their contract do not allow them to increase costs without documenting why. **Ms. Cory** clarified that one of the fees referred to is for licensing, the other fee is for examinations.
- VOTE ON MOTION:** **Chairman Raybould** called for a vote on the motion to introduce **RS 22028**.  
**Motion carried by voice vote.**
- Teri Murrison**, Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Commission, presented their annual report to the Committee. She stated the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, Soil and Water Conservation District, Natural Resource Conservation Service, and the Idaho District Employees Association are partners in Idaho's oldest conservation effort. She explained that although their priorities are soil and water, their partnership is also a leading force for the conservation of air, plant, and animal resources.
- Ms. Murrison** said during the thirties, Idaho had dust and erosion issues caused by what were, at the time, common agricultural and land management practices. In 1935, the US Soil Conservation Service, now the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), began working with farmers, states, and local groups to address the problem. Idaho joined the effort, establishing the Commission in 1939, and a few years later as units of local government - soil conservation districts. Ms. Murrison explained the goal of the Commission is to use natural resources to the benefit of the people, while maintaining and improving them for future generations. She said they focus on voluntary, cooperative efforts with local people, not a "heavy-handed" regulatory approach.

**Ms. Murrison** said one of the Commission's core functions is to provide technical and other support to 50 Conservation Districts. Technical support includes conservation planning, engineering services, project implementation and construction inspections, and more. She stated their second core function is to provide incentive and general conservation programs. One of these programs is the Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program (RCRDP). Ms. Murrison explained the incentive program allows landowners to operate under a conservation plan, improving practices and/or replacing equipment to produce conservation benefits such as water savings and erosion reduction, in exchange for low interest loans. Under the general conservation program, the Commission manages the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program. Ms. Murrison explained this is a multi-agency state effort to conserve water use in the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer. Participating landowners receive modest federal payments for not farming.

**Ms. Murrison** discussed Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation planning for water quality impaired surface waters in the state. She stated the DEQ develops and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approves a TMDL. The commission then puts together a plan specifying watershed-specific best management practices to reduce agriculture and grazing related pollutant loads. Ms. Murrison said they receive an average of seven TMDLs a year, and review existing plans every five years to see if addendums are necessary.

**Ms. Murrison** explained conservation efforts are increasingly impacted by: urban growth, continually shrinking funds and resources for voluntary conservation, water quality concerns pushing other funding priorities aside, and increased federal regulatory and endangered species issues. She said they will continue focusing on core responsibilities, prioritizing use of staff and funds, and streamlining operations.

**Bret Rumbeck**, Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts, presented examples of programs in two of the legislative districts. In District 1, the Boundary Soil Conservation District, in partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Soil and Water Conservation Commission, helped to complete an Animal Feedlot Operation (AFO) for a beef waste storage facility. The project is located in the Deep Creek TMDL Watershed and will reduce nutrient load into Deep Creek improving water quality of this tributary to the Kootenai River. In District 34, the Ag Energy Efficiency Program grant resulted in 19 energy audits to determine potential for energy efficiency measures. So far this year, over 40,000 Kilowatt Hours were saved through implementation of energy efficient irrigation practices. This grant is in cooperation with High Country Resource Conservation and Development, Bonneville Power Administration, and local utilities.

In answer to questions on how the projects are funded, **Ms. Murrison** explained that State Statute dictates each district receives \$8500 per year. In addition, the districts can go to the local government for funds that will then be matched by the state. **Mr. Rumbeck** added that districts can apply for various grants, such as the Eclipse program, available through the NRCS, Bonneville Power money, and 319 grants, available through the DEQ.

**Chairman Raybould** gave recognition to House Page **Brady Gaschler** thanking him for his services over the past 6 weeks.

**Chairman Raybould** reported on a message from Speaker Bedke concerning voting, stating however a Representative voted in Committee, they must vote the same on the floor. If they would like to change their vote, they are obligated to notify the sponsor of the bill and the Chairman.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:32 p.m.

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Representative Raybould  
Chair

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Lynn Walker  
Secretary