

MINUTES
SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 19, 2013

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Bair, Vice Chairman Guthrie, Senators Brackett, Tippetts, Rice, Nonini, Patrick, Durst and Buckner-Webb

ABSENT/ EXCUSED:

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 Bair** called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

INTRODUCTION: **Chairman Bair** introduced **Kyle Hoodenpyle**, the new Page for Agricultural Affairs, who gave a brief biography on his background.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT: The committee considered the gubernatorial appointment of H. Norman Wright to the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Guthrie** moved to send the gubernatorial appointment of H. Norman Wright to the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission to the floor with the recommendation that he be confirmed by the Senate. **Senator Tippetts** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Vice Chairman Guthrie will be the sponsor.

PRESENTATION: **Chairman Bair** introduced **George Gough**, Manager, Government Affairs at Monsanto Company, who spoke about Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO), biotechnology and Monsanto's contribution to agriculture. Monsanto has been in existence for 110 years, but for the past 15 years their focus has been purely as an agricultural company. Monsanto's goal is to assist the farmer through the use of their breeding program, application of biotech traits and/or agronomic solutions, so farmers can produce affordable food, feed and fiber for the growing population. There are about 1,000 employees here in Idaho at their four facilities; the largest is in Soda Springs, where phosphate ore is mined and processed into elemental phosphorus, the key ingredient in their flagship herbicide product, Roundup. Monsanto is a global company headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri with 500 global locations, 21,000 employees and sales of \$11 billion. Monsanto is more than just Roundup and has a corn and soybean seed division, cotton division and a vegetable division that is located in Nampa, Idaho. There are a large number of seeds grown in the Treasure Valley which are processed in the Nampa facility, and shipped throughout the world.

1996 was the first year the Roundup ready soybean and Bollgard cotton agricultural biotech crops were offered for large-scale commercial use. With Roundup ready herbicide tolerant crops, herbicide can be sprayed on top of the crop killing weeds without killing the crop. It is favored for ease and effectiveness of weed control, and creates opportunities of implementing conservation tillage (minimal disturbance to the soil). Insect protection through technology is built into the plant, requiring less pesticide usage.

Mr. Gough went on to explain about the difference in conventional breeding and transgenic breeding and answered questions regarding the safety of transferring genes and possible harm to humans. Monsanto is required to provide data to regulatory agencies that monitor these activities. GMO in food is heavily regulated throughout the world. California's Proposition 37 that would require labeling of products containing GMO ingredients lost in the polls by three percent.

Supporting documents related Mr. Gough's presentation have been archived and can be accessed in the office of the Committee Secretary (See attachment 17).

PRESENTATION:

Chairman Bair introduced **Lloyd Knight**, Administrator, Division of Plant Industries, Idaho Department of Agriculture, who spoke about the Noxious Weeds and Invasive Species program that his department is responsible for enforcing. **Mr. Knight** talked about the staff assigned to the program, and how they rely heavily on temporary seasonal workers for help. Idaho Noxious Weeds Law, Idaho Code § 22-2400, was the first law of its kind in the country. This law lists the specific responsibilities of both the state and counties in managing and controlling the weeds.

The noxious weed budget for 2012 was \$1,249,902. These funds came from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Idaho State general fund. Funds previously received from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) stopped in 2008. Of the budget total, \$108,000 was used for the Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign (IWAC) for educational purposes. The remaining balance was used for on-the-ground weed eradication and represents an in-kind ratio of about 3:1. This money is important to the counties, as it can provide in-kind money that can help them in getting their own federal grants. With input from the counties, the Cost Share Accomplishments worksheet identifies where and how the grant money they received was spent and helps the department identify any trends that may require extra attention. The department's budget for 2013 is \$1,320,247 and they are identifying projects that will get funded this year.

Mr. Knight next talked about Invasive Species. The Invasive Species Council, started in 2005, is responsible for policy-level recommendations to the department for planning assistance in combatting invasive species and recommending steps of action that are in the Strategic Plan. The Invasive Species Act was put into place in 2008 and gave the department authority to deal with this as a regulatory issue allowing for inspections and quarantines. 2012 saw the first year the Noxious Weed and Invasive Species Strategic Plans were merged into one strategic plan. The rules governing invasive species outlines prohibitions on possession, importation, shipping or transportation of invasive species, lists information on these invasive species, as well as requirements for inspections, hold orders and decontamination.

Mr. Knight explained that the Quagga and Zebra Mussels are a major concern to the state, and require ongoing efforts by the department and counties to control. There are over seventy water bodies in Idaho, surveyed in 2012. There are fifteen inspection stations at the state line that operate seasonally and eleven ports of entry inspecting commercially hauled watercraft year-round. In 2012 there were 42,383 total inspections, with fifty-seven fouled watercrafts. This is more than a 50 percent increase from 2011.

Mr. Knight said although the Quagga and Zebra Mussels get the most attention and require the most effort, there are other issues the department is dealing with as well. With the pet trade industry selling the red ear slider turtles, serious problems are created when owners set them free in the wild. Out-of-state firewood that is brought into Idaho can harbor bugs and beetles that can harm trees and plants. One new challenge the department will be facing this year is the Japanese Beetle. Extra efforts will be required to resurvey the infested areas as well as more treatments for eradication.

Supporting documents related to Mr. Knight's presentation have been archived and can be accessed in the office of the Committee Secretary (See attachment 18).

ADJOURNED: **Chairman Bair** adjourned the meeting at 9:29 a.m.

Senator Bair
Chairman

Denise McNeil
Secretary