

MINUTES  
**SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 26, 2013

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW53

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Brackett, Vice Chairman Johnson, Senators Keough, Winder, Rice, Nonini, Hagedorn, Bock and Buckner-Webb

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:**

**NOTE:** The sign-in sheet, testimonies and other related materials will be retained with the minutes in the Senate Transportation Committee (Committee) office until the end of the session and will then be located on file with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

**CONVENED:** **Chairman Brackett** called the meeting to order at 1:35 p.m. and asked the secretary to take a silent role. With a quorum present, the **Chairman** welcomed Senator Nuxoll to the Committee and asked her to present **S 1082**.

**S 1082** **Senator Nuxoll** thanked Chairman Brackett and said that **S 1082** creates an Emergency Medical Services (EMS) volunteer specialty license plate. The Idaho EMS is on a cliff same as the fiscal budget. The average age of volunteer EMS providers and the number of volunteers continue to put volunteer units in jeopardy. As part of a recruitment/retention project, EMS thought that volunteers' time and personal cost should be recognized and rewarded. This special license plate is being offered as recognition of the individual's commitment to their community. Volunteers comprise fifty-three percent of Idaho EMS providers. The plate would only be available to volunteers or compensated volunteers where less than ten percent of their annual income comes from their EMS service. There is no additional cost annually over the cost of a standard plate for EMS volunteers. The number of EMS volunteers in Idaho has declined from 2,688 in 2002 to 2,135 in 2012. Many communities, including Grangeville, Cottonwood, Riggins and Kooskia, have two ambulances each, which would make the annual cost for paid EMS providers well over \$300,000 per ambulance. Counties are required to provide EMS services and are fiscally dependent on volunteers.

**Senator Nuxoll** continued that the cost to become a volunteer EMS (not including travel and time) includes a \$60 background check, a \$70 testing fee, books costing approximately \$100, and over 150 hours of training. Once they become a volunteer, they need to commit additional time for training in order to keep their license. EMS believes that this specialty license plate is a proactive approach to support this essential and required community service. Without it, volunteer service could be dropped and county commissioners would have to increase taxes and create ambulance-taxing districts to address the expense of this vital and required public service.

**Senator Nuxoll** introduced Wayne Denny, Idaho Department of Health and Welfare's EMS Director. She said that Mr. Denny had worked out the plate's costs with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) and came up with a cost per volunteer, per plate of \$13. **Senator Nuxoll** suggested that Mr. Denny could answer questions about the volunteer program and the specialty license plate. She also told the Committee that Bill Spencer, an EMS volunteer in Grangeville, was on the telephone listening to the hearing and was willing to testify. **Senator Nuxoll** thanked the Committee and ended her testimony by saying that this is a meaningful way to recognize these volunteers for the good work they do. With that, **Senator Nuxoll** stood for questions. The Committee members had no questions for the Senator but asked questions of Mr. Denny.

After reading through section 3, lines 27 through 33, **Senator Rice** said it appeared there was no registration fee except for the first year of the plate. **Mr. Denny** said that to keep costs low, there would be no fee above the regular licensing fee, which ITD okayed.

**Chairman Brackett** asked if the \$13 cost was to cover administrative fees. **Mr. Denny** said it paid for ITD's staff to run the program.

**Vice Chairman Johnson** asked how this differed from other specialty license plates. **Mr. Denny** said they conducted a series of town meetings last summer in rural communities that have EMS volunteer programs. The results showed the number of EMS volunteers were down and recruiting strategy became a topic for discussion. Recognition, which reflects appreciation, was something frequently brought up because EMS volunteers feel under-appreciated. Many times they drive their private vehicles to scenes; a specialty EMS volunteer license plate would give them recognition as being part of a team. **Vice Chairman Johnson** asked if there were other specialty plates that had a similar fee structure. **Mr. Denny** said that a similar plate is the national guard plate, but it has no fee attached; the Corvette owners plate was an example of most specialty plates that have higher fees attached. From a fee perspective, the EMS volunteer plate is in-between those two. Both of these examples brought plates forward to support a program or fund a grant. A higher fee for the EMS volunteer plate was not appropriate because these volunteers already pay to be on the team. There were no further questions for Mr. Denny.

**Senator Keough** asked Amy Smith, ITD's Vehicle Services Manager, what makes this plate different from other specialty license plates. **Ms. Smith** said that an individual has to qualify to have it issued to them (similar to the national guard plate); it doesn't generate any revenue for other programs; and, the purchaser only pays a registration fee.

**Chairman Brackett** asked about the \$3,000 expense to the license plate program mentioned in the fiscal note. **Ms. Smith** said that amount is what it costs ITD to administer the program.

**Vice Chairman Johnson** asked if that expense includes the cost for the sample plate. **Ms. Smith** said it did. **Vice Chairman Johnson** asked if it costs \$3,000 to set up the program, would there be additional expenses for the sample plate. **Ms. Smith** said they sell lots of sample plates to various interests and collectors around the world and, therefore, there is no additional fee required.

**Senator Hagedorn** asked if there was mechanism to get the plate back if an EMS volunteer leaves the position. **Ms. Smith** said that when they renew their plates they need to prove they are still an EMS volunteer. ITD could also receive letters from EMS when there is a change in status.

**Senator Keough** asked if there are other plates where "status" is needed for identification to purchase a plate. **Ms. Smith** cited examples of other plates where a form of identification is required; some only require identification when they first apply. There were no further questions for Ms. Smith.

**TESTIMONY:**

**Bill Spencer**, EMS at Syringa Hospital in Grangeville, was connected by speaker phone and made a statement. He gave his background as an EMS and explained how difficult it is to find volunteers in rural areas. **Mr. Spencer** confirmed what Mr. Denny had shared earlier. He concluded by stating that any help to promote the program and secure volunteers would be very helpful. There were no questions for Mr. Spencer.

**MOTION:**

**Chairman Brackett** called for a motion. **Senator Hagedorn** moved that **S 1082** be sent to the Senate floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Keough** seconded the motion. **Chairman Brackett** asked if there was any discussion.

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION:**

**Senator Bock** said that every specialty license plate is for a good cause, but the list is growing long. He said that he must honor his commitment to never vote for any specialty license plate legislation. With that, **Senator Bock** moved that **S 1082** be held in Committee. **Senator Buckner-Webb** seconded the motion. The substitute motion **failed** by voice vote.

**VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION:**

**Chairman Brackett** called for a vote on the original motion. The motion carried by majority **voice vote**. **Senator Bock** and **Senator Buckner-Webb** asked that their "no" votes be recorded. **Senator Nuxoll** will carry the bill on the Senate floor.

**H 66**

**Chairman Brackett** welcomed Laura Johnson of the Idaho Department of Agriculture and the Idaho Rural Economic Development and Integrated Freight Transportation (REDIFIT) loan program to the Committee and asked her to present **H 66**.

**Ms. Johnson** gave background about how the REDIFIT program came to the Idaho Department of Agriculture. REDIFIT was transferred to the Idaho Department of Agriculture in 2007 from the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor in order to engage a working group and set up the program. During the transfer, the name "Idaho Department of Agriculture" was inserted in statutes intended for monitoring railroads. This was an oversight and outside the scope of the mission of the Idaho Department of Agriculture; it should be redirected to ITD. **H 66** does that. The Interagency Working Group remains at the Idaho Department of Agriculture, but ITD will advise the working group on their programs. **Ms. Johnson** stood for questions.

**Senator Hagedorn** referred to page 1, line 44, and asked why this language remained in the bill. **Ms. Johnson** said it was an oversight.

**Senator Winder** suggested that an amendment should be prepared to clean up the statute and make this technical correction.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Keough** moved to send **H 66** to the 14th Order for amendment. **Senator Rice** seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous **voice vote**. **Senator Keough** will carry the bill on the Senate floor.

Before moving on to presentations, **Chairman Brackett** asked the Committee to make note of the 2012 annual report of the Local Highway Technical Assistance Council in their packets. This update was provided by the council in accordance with their statutory obligation under section 40-2404, Idaho Code. **Chairman Brackett** then welcomed Julie DeLorenzo to the Committee. **Ms. DeLorenzo** is a member of the Idaho Transportation Board, she thanked the Chairman, and commented that it was a pleasure to be at today's hearing.

**PRESENTATION:** **Chairman Brackett** welcomed Matt Stoll, Executive Director of Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS), to the Committee. **Mr. Stoll** presented an update on the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) in Idaho. **Mr. Stoll** emphasized that MPOs play a key role in transportation planning and investment in Idaho. He further described what MPOs are, why they exist, what they do and where they are located in Idaho. He then went on to outline the long-range plan for Idaho, the inputs attributed to the plan and how well the state's MPOs and ITD worked together. He briefly talked about the new federal transportation law, Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), that was signed into law on July 6, 2012. He concluded by describing the challenges facing MPOs. Mr. Stoll's complete presentation is part of the permanent record on file in the Committee's office. **Mr. Stoll** stood for questions.

**Senator Winder** thanked Mr. Stoll for his thorough presentation. **Senator Winder** made a comment about the matching of every dollar invested and said that it needs to be a consistent number. **Mr. Stoll** agreed and said they were working with ITD on calculating that. On the public transportation side, money is being left on the table because there are few matching funds.

**Senator Nonini** suggested that cities crossing state lines like Lewiston/Clarkston and Coeur d'Alene/Spokane need to work together. He asked about the air quality issue of Spokane's bad air that is affecting Coeur d'Alene. **Mr. Stoll** said there are two separate issues: Spokane and Kootenai. The analysis does not show a significant air quality issue from Spokane to the Coeur d'Alene area. **Senator Nonini** asked what role do gravel roads play in air quality planning. **Mr. Stoll** said that once there is a determination of a non-attainment area then measurable data can be collected for analysis. He was not familiar with any issues in North Idaho, but he did offer examples of similar situations in Ada County. **Senator Nonini** commented that in North Idaho the Department of Environmental Quality wanted to include air quality equipment in their budget for North Idaho, but because of the problem with the air in Washington state it was not done.

**Senator Hagedorn** asked if the local MPO stretched into Canyon County. **Mr. Stoll** said that the non-attainment area is in northern Ada County for carbon monoxide, but COMPASS extends into Ada and Canyon counties. There were no further questions for Mr. Stoll.

**PRESENTATION:** **Chairman Brackett** thanked Mr. Stoll for his update to the Committee and welcomed Heather Wheeler, Executive Director of the Community Transportation Association of Idaho (CTAI), to give an update on CTAI activity.

**Mr. Wheeler** proceeded to review Idaho's coordinated transportation system and structure, she covered highlights from 2012, shared prior year's services by district, identified some of the impacts that the increased transportation options provide, gave an overview for this year and next, and concluded with volunteer opportunities at CTAI. Ms. Wheeler's complete presentation documents are part of the permanent record on file in the Committee office. **Ms. Wheeler** stood for questions.

**Vice Chairman Johnson** asked what role other forms of transportation, like bicycles, play in CTAI's plan. **Ms. Wheeler** said that today's presentation was about public transportation, but there are studies on bicycles like the Transportation Alternatives Program, or TAP, that hasn't been released yet. **Vice Chairman Johnson** commented that as communities prepare transportation plans, these types of projects should be kept in mind. **Ms. Wheeler** said that district managers are looking at all of this; she used the community of Challis, Idaho, as an example of considering alternative transportation options. There were no further questions for Ms. Wheeler.

**ADJOURNED:** **Chairman Brackett** thanked Ms. Wheeler for her presentation. With no further business before the Committee, **Chairman Brackett** adjourned the meeting at 2:45 p.m.

---

Senator Brackett  
Chairman

---

Gaye Bennett  
Secretary