

MINUTES  
JOINT MEETING

**HOUSE TRANSPORTATION & DEFENSE COMMITTEE  
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, January 22, 2015

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

**PLACE:** WW02

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Palmer, Vice Chairman Shepherd, Representatives Wills, Bateman, Gestrin, Hixon, Kauffman, Packer, Youngblood, McDonald, Dixon, Harris, Holtzclaw, Monks, King, Rudolph, Wintrow

Chairman Brackett, Vice Chairman Nonini, Senators Keough, Winder, Hagedorn, Vick, Den Hartog, Buckner-Webb, Lacey

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Rep. Wills, Senator Winder, Senator Hagedorn, Senator Buckner-Webb

**GUESTS:** The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office until the end of the session. Following the end of the session, the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

**Senator Brackett** called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**Brian Ness**, Director Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), gave an annual report and update from the Idaho Transportation Department. Mr. Ness explained his report would have four parts. A brief overview of the Governor's budget recommendation, a report on how they have improved ITD, the results of making those improvements, and what they will focus on in 2015. He said 88% of their funding goes to the highway system paying for highway operations, contract construction, and debt service for critical projects they accelerate in. The ITD would like to reduce the full-time positions by 28 positions for FY 16, and use that funding to pay for a pilot program for transportation technicians. He said employee innovations are producing better service to the tax payers, and helping reduce the FTP (full-time positions) count. Removing 28 positions and retaining the funding will do two things: first, it will allow for increased training and skills of employees. Second, as they improve their skills, it will allow for them to be paid accordingly.

**Mr. Ness** explained federal funding comes to ITD thru Map 21. Map 21 was a two year federal bill which expired last September, but was extended to May 31st. Map 21 has an average annually 15 billion dollar shortfall, and money has been taken from the Federal General Fund to make up that difference.

**Mr. Ness** said 1996 was the year Idaho last increased the user fees on fuel. He said state funds made up 54% of ITD's total revenue, which is now reduced and 54% of funding is now federal. Idaho is growing more reliant on federal money for roads and bridges. ITD realigned the agency from top to bottom, and these realignments had many benefits. It significantly improved customer service and now each layer of the organization has clear defined roles. Mr. Ness said one third of ITD's workforce is now made up of people who maintain the roads. He said with fewer people, employees have increased their performance and the service that they provide to the tax payers.

**Mr. Ness** explained in 2013 Idaho had 20% fewer highway fatalities than in 2006 despite a 4% increase in miles traveled annually. Transportation investments have also improve mobility because they modernize the infrastructure. He said recent innovations have improved the way they manage ITD's budget. One of ITD's most innovated practices is the way they select highway projects. ITD selects projects based on the impact they will have on system condition, safety, and the state's economy.

**Mr. Ness** reviewed the three focus areas in 2015 with the first being continuous improvement, employee development, and infrastructure needs. In 2015 ITD will use innovative business practices, make decisions closer to where work is done, and move the needle forward on ITD's 10 performance measures. He said ITD employees are members of the communities where they work. The second area of focus will be on employee development. Mr. Ness said workforce plan addresses the tidal wave of retirements, hires replacements with skills to meet future demands, and trains the remaining 50% of employees. The third focus area will be to address the state's infrastructure needs. He said Idaho does not have the funding to support the needs of an aging system. The governor's task force found that Idaho is \$543 million short annually in transportation funding. Of that, \$262 million is needed just to preserve the existing system. In 1996 the fuels tax was 25 cents per gallon, and today nearly two decades later, it is still 25 cents per gallon.

For more information on the Governor's Task Force you can visit:  
[https://itd.idaho.gov/taskforce/Task\\_Force\\_Final\\_Report\\_Low\\_Res.pdf](https://itd.idaho.gov/taskforce/Task_Force_Final_Report_Low_Res.pdf)

Idaho bridges are designed to last 40-60 years. However, at the rate of current funding levels, they must last 120 years. The older a bridge gets, the more expensive it gets to maintain a good condition. He explained between 2014-2019 they will replace 87 bridges but despite those replacements another 147 bridges will reach the half century mark. In 2019, 908 bridges will be more than 50 years old, and that is nearly half of the bridges on the state highway system. Bridges in Idaho are inspected once every two years, if a bridge is deemed unsafe, ITD will restrict or close the bridge. **Mr. Ness** said restricted bridges force trucks to take long detours or carry smaller loads. Bridge restrictions do insure public safety but also hinder the economy.

**Mr. Ness** explained pavements are also aging. He said depending on traffic loads and weather, a new highway will last approximately 20 years, but only if it was well maintained. Today 85% of ITD's pavement is in good or fair condition. In 2019 it will decrease to 76% as good or fair. Every \$1 we invest now while the system is in good condition we will save \$6-\$14 in the future.

**Mr. Ness** explained Idaho's economy is beginning to turn around, but to accelerate we must begin investing in transportation. This will grow the economy and put contractors back to work. It will also reduce crashes and fatalities.

**Jerry Whitehead**, Chairman of the Idaho Transportation Board (ITB) gave a report from the Idaho Transportation Board. He explained in order for them to accomplish what they need, they will need additional funding. The board has oversight over the department.

**Blake Rindlisbacher** from ITD reviewed the investment in the ITD infrastructure system and the system condition. Mr. Rindlisbacher reviewed the ITD GARVEE and stimulus investment history, safety benefits of GARVEE and stimulus, and the pavement surface condition and projection. There are a total of 4,198 state and local bridges in Idaho, and many bridges are over 50 years old, which is a statewide problem.

**Dave Tollman**, Controller, Idaho Transportation Department, presented information on the impact of inflation on the revenue trends that support the department. Some of the trends that affect the revenue are vehicle miles traveled (VMT), passenger cars registered, and driver's licenses in force. Policy makers in the past have recognized the need for transportation revenue, and periodically have made adjustments. Mr. Tollman explained how indexed funds behave vs. fixed funds.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:44 p.m.

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Representative Palmer  
Chair

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Amber Duke  
Secretary