

MINUTES

**HOUSE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY, & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, February 18, 2015

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

**PLACE:** Room EW41

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Thompson, Vice Chairman Anderst, Representatives Raybould, Hartgen, Vander Woude, Nielsen, Anderson, Mendive, Trujillo, Beyeler, Chaney, Nate, Scott, Smith, Rusche, Jordan, Rubel

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Beyeler

Chairman Thompson called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

**GUESTS:** Steve Becker, Benjamin Kelly, Idaho Association Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD); Orville Green, Curt Fransen, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

**MOTION:** **Rep. Jordan** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 10, 2015. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**MOTION:** **Rep. Jordan** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 12, 2015. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**H 57:** **Orville Green**, on behalf of the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality presented **H 57** to the committee. He stated the purpose of this bill is to use the remaining \$250,000 from the ten allotted pilot projects to remediate contaminated properties in Idaho communities for two more projects to restore them to productive use.

In response to questions, **Mr. Green** explained the remaining funds will go back to the General Fund per the original statute. He said this is not a loan, it is a financial incentive program. Mr. Green explained due to the recession property values have shown a decline, creating an unclear end to values for the properties. He said DEQ intends to bring back legislation after the final report which was not requested in the original legislation, to continue treatment of contaminated properties. DEQ would like to use the remaining funds to bring back a more thorough report on the pilot project. He also said two more projects will extend the job by two to three years.

**ORIGINAL MOTION:** **Rep. Scott** made a motion to **HOLD H 57** in committee.

**SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** **Rep. Rusche** made a substitute motion to send **H 57** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

**Curt Fransen**, Director Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) responded to questions to explain the end remaining funds will go back to the General Fund. He said originally they were not asked to make a report, only to present certifications for each remediated, contaminated property. Mr. Fransen said a report could take up to next year.

**ROLL CALL VOTE ON SUBSTITUTE MOTION:** **Rep. Rusche** requested a roll call vote. **Motion failed by a vote of 6 AYE and 10 NAY, 1 absent/excused. Voting in favor** of the motion: **Reps. Thompson, Raybould, Smith, Rusche, Jordan, and Rubel. Voting in opposition** to the motion: **Reps. Anderst, Hartgen, Vander Woude, Nielsen, Anderson, Mendive, Trujillo, Chaney, Nate, and Scott. Rep. Beyeler** was absent/excused.

**VOTE ON ORIGINAL MOTION:**

**Motion carried by voice vote. Representative(s) Smith, Rusche, Jordan, and Rubel** requested to be recorded as voting **NAY**.

**Teri Murrison**, Administrator of the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC) presented to the committee the Fiscal Year 2015 Annual Report narrative. ISWCC focuses on three core functions: providing districts with technical and other support services, offering non-regulatory, science-based incentive programs to develop voluntary conservation practices, and administration. There are fifty districts in Idaho that ISWCC provides specialized technical assistance for conservative planning, engineering, watershed assessments, and sage grouse, fish and other species conservation projects. In 2014 ISWCC helped 38 of 50 districts with projects, initiated 57 new projects, worked on 103 ongoing projects and with partners served 386 landowners.

**Ms. Murrison**, also presented the second core function of ISWCC is providing incentive based and general conservation programs and services. ISWCC's flagship incentive program, the Resource Conservation and Rangeland Development Program provides low interest loans to purchase equipment and install projects that provide conservation benefits. ISWCC saw an increase in inquiries and applications in 2014, approving twelve loans, which was eight more than 2013.

**Ms. Murrison**, also stated ISWCC's Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) conserves water usage on marginal farm ground in the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer. Participating landowners receive \$130 an acre per year from the Farm Service Agency in exchange for not farming these lands. Last year 156 CREP contracts were signed enrolling 146,792 acres, saving 66,916 acre feet of water, enough to serve about 330,000 people, save almost 134,000 tons of soil erosion, diverting up to 4.5 million pounds of fertilizer benefiting wildlife and Idaho fish.

**Ms. Murrison**, also said they assist DEQ in preparing Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plans to reduce agriculturally generated pollutants in Idaho's impaired surface waters. She said since starting they have completed 99 plans, 6 in 2014 and juggling 15 in the process. There are nineteen new or the pending plans . Agricultural Pollution Abatement Plan update is revised about every ten years and the final Plan will be certified by the Governor by July 1st.

In response to questions, **Ms. Murrison**, explained funds come from 319 grants, some state and private partners. These state investments compound several times over and come back to the state.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 3:05 p.m.

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Representative Thompson  
Chair

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Heidi McKay  
Secretary