

MINUTES
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Friday, March 06, 2015

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman McKenzie, Vice Chairman Lodge, Senators Davis, Hill, Winder, Siddoway, Lakey, Stennett and Buckner-Webb

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

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 McKenzie** called the Senate State Affairs Committee (Committee) to order at 8:03 a.m.

RS 23711 **A Unanimous Consent Request from the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee Regarding a Senate Concurrent Resolution for a Rule Rejection.**

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Lodge** moved to send **RS 23711** to print. **Senator Lakey** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT HEARING: **The Gubernatorial Appointment of George Eskridge to the Idaho Energy Resources Authority (IERA).**

Chairman McKenzie welcomed Representative Eskridge and asked him if he had attended any meetings and what his unique background in energy and the Legislature will bring to the IERA. **Representative Eskridge** responded that the first meeting since his appointment will be next week. His value to the IERA is the result of his experience.

Representative Eskridge said he started in the energy field with the Rural Electrification Administration working throughout the United States with co-ops on rate studies. He worked as an economist with public utilities through his association with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and then moved into a management position with the BPA.

After retiring from the BPA, he was elected to the House of Representatives. He was assigned to the Interim Energy Committee and was involved with the development of the Idaho Energy Plan. He served on the Standing Committee of Energy, Environment and Technology and also works with the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region on related energy issues.

Representative Eskridge explained that he was a cosponsor of the Idaho Energy Resources Act in 2005. He said he has a real interest in the IERA, explaining that the purpose of the IERA is to continue the State's obligation to provide energy to its citizens at the lowest possible cost.

Chairman McKenzie asked for Representative Eskridge's thoughts on the value of the Legislative Energy, Environment and Technology Interim Committee. **Representative Eskridge** responded that he enthusiastically supports the continuation of that committee. There is not a national energy policy although they keep trying to develop one. It benefits Idaho citizens to be prepared to respond to any national government programs or mandates. Energy is one of the three legs of the economy, and it benefits Idaho to keep costs low.

In addition to energy, Idaho must get into the environmental world. Considering the conversations about invasive species, the Energy Committee could help solve that issue so Idaho's water bodies are not inundated and ruined. Technological advances also must be addressed. **Representative Eskridge** said he would like to see that committee continue.

Chairman McKenzie stated his personal appreciation for Representative Eskridge as a model and leader in the Legislature. **Representative Eskridge** acknowledged that the highlight and biggest honor that he has had was serving the people of Idaho.

RS 23718 A Concurrent Resolution Recognizing and Honoring John J. Grossenbacher.

Senator Davis stated that Admiral Grossenbacher is retiring from his service at the Idaho National Laboratory (INL) and the purpose of this Concurrent Resolution is to express the gratitude of the Legislature to Admiral Grossenbacher for his actions on behalf of the INL.

MOTION: **Senator Siddoway** moved to send **RS 23718** to print. **Senator Hill** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 23732 Relating to Public Lands to Create an Office of Public Lands.

Senator Winder said that **RS 23732** is the second piece of legislation the Federal Lands Interim Committee put forward to establish an oversight council made up of Legislators and citizens from the stakeholder community.

Senator Stennett asked for clarification about the creation of an administrator that appears to be independent and equal to the Governor. She asked if the work performed by this office under the Department of Lands could create a conflict between the Governor and the proposed administrator. **Senator Winder** said that the council would be under the direction of the Legislature and would be working with the executive area. The administrator would not be equal to the Governor. **Senator Stennett** asked if the \$250,000 to set up the department would be annually. **Senator Winder** responded that it would be annually.

MOTION: **Senator Lakey** moved to send **RS 23732** to print. **Senator Hill** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senators Stennett and Buckner-Webb were recorded as voting nay.

ADJOURNED: **Chairman McKenzie** adjourned the meeting at 8:23 a.m.

Senator McKenzie
Chair

Twyla Melton
Secretary