

MINUTES
HOUSE RESOURCES & CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 09, 2015

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW40

MEMBERS: Chairman Raybould, Vice Chairman Gestrin, Representative(s) Moyle, Andrus, Shepherd, Wood, Boyle, Vander Woude, Gibbs, Miller, Bateman, Burtenshaw, Mendive, VanOrden, Youngblood, Pence, Erpelding, Rubel

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Moyle, Erpelding

GUESTS: Rex Barrie, Water District #63; Brian Patton, Idaho Department of Water Resources; Brandt Bullock, Idaho Water Users Association; Norm Semanko, Idaho Water Users Association; Vernon E. Case, Wilder Irrigation District.

Chairman Raybould called the meeting to order at 2:15 p.m.

S 1100: **Norm Semanko**, Idaho Water Users Association, stated Water District #1 has been utilizing weather modification for the past twenty years and the Wood River Valley is using cloud seeding to increase their water supply. Mr. Semanko indicated many partners including water districts, the Idaho Department of Water Resources, and Idaho Power have been or are considering using weather modification techniques, such as cloud seeding, to increase the surface water supply. He said weather modification activities need to be included in the state water resource plan.

Mr. Semanko said Water District #63 does not have a robust water bank or a fund for weather modification activities. They are considering using a portion of their administrative budget to support weather modification activities. Mr. Semanko stated a vote at a water district's annual meeting will determine whether a water district participates in weather modification activities.

Rex Barrie, Water Master for Water District #63, stated consecutive minimal water over a period of years can affect the water districts' operational costs and their ability to operate. He stated the Bureau of Reclamation pays \$40,000 for the Salmon water and funds received from the Bureau of Reclamation may diminish in a low water year.

Brian Patton, Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR), is representing the Water Resource Board to encourage stabilization strategies to augment the winter snow pack. Mr. Patton stated utilizing surface water deters the need for ground water pumping and depleting the aquifer levels. He said Idaho Power is cloud seeding in the Payette and upper Snake River Basins. Mr. Patton indicated the Water Resource Board has appropriated \$492,000 to cloud seeding and weather modification activities.

Vern Case, Wilder Irrigation District, indicated the previous testimony was sufficient and he did not have any information to add in his testimony.

Jon Bowling, Idaho Power, testified that silver oxide is used in cloud seeding. He provided Idaho Power has three meteorologists on staff and sophisticated equipment for weather modification activities. He stated it is a well-managed program and research has shown the target area provides downstream benefits at 14.4% increase for winter cloud seeding and has contributed to the snow pack supply. Mr. Bowling further explained that atmospheric conditions are checked and the conditions must be specific for effective cloud seeding. He added that water vapor from the seeding replenishes itself.

Rep. Miller declared **Rule 38** stating a possible conflict of interest on **S 1100**, but he would be voting on the legislation.

MOTION: **Rep. Miller** made a motion to send **S 1100** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Gibbs** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Representative Raybould
Chair

Jennifer Smith
Secretary