

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, January 28, 2016

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW42

MEMBERS: Chairman Andrus, Vice Chairman Boyle, Representatives McMillan, Batt, Bell, Dayley, Miller, Romrell, VanOrden, Burtenshaw, Kerby, Troy, Pence, Erpelding

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Rep. Boyle

GUESTS: John Revier, Idaho National Lab; Sean Ellis, Capitol Press.

Chairman Andrus called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

DOCKET NO. 42-0101-1501: **Blaine Jacobson**, Executive Director of Idaho Wheat Commission, stated the changes are necessary to update the rules to proper-format and to clarify terminology. The assessment rate was increased in 2013 after surveying wheat growers and finding support was 3-1 in favor of a higher tax for the purpose of investing in more research and industry infrastructure. The quarterly return forms create an administrative burden for the Commission and will no longer be provided. The rule change increases the amount per bushel from \$.02 to \$.03 1/2 cents to the Commission under commodity credit loans; brings rules in line with the required rules format; and corrects terminology. Other changes are in the elevator operator report. He stated other commissions have a similar reporting mechanism in place that assists in making the commission more efficient in communicating and representing the growers. The Attorney General's office stated this report would be considered a trade secret and should be kept confidential.

The committee expressed a concern the operator report would become public per the Public Records Act.

MOTION: **Rep. Kerby** made a motion to approve **Docket No. 42-0101-1501** with the exception of Section 400.03.

Chairman Andrus put the committee at ease at 1:52 p.m.

Chairman Andrus resumed the meeting at 1:57 p.m.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST: **Rep. Kerby** asked for unanimous consent to withdraw the motion. **There being no objection, the request was granted.**

MOTION: **Rep. Kerby** made a motion to hold **Docket No. 42-0101-1501** in committee at the call of the chair. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 23992: **Blaine Jacobson**, Executive Director of Idaho Wheat Commission, stated the proposed legislation's purpose is to allow them to be more efficient, correct terminology inconsistencies, clarify the role of the executive director, and provide that invoice forms will be supplied by the commission.

MOTION: **Rep. Troy** made a motion to introduce **RS 23992**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 24213: **Rep. Dayley** explained this proposed legislation re-authorizes Title 67, Chapter 90, Idaho Code, short-titled the "Idaho Rural Development Partnership Act," with technical and conforming amendments. These amendments (1) clarify the appointing authority for certain positions on the Idaho Rural Partnership Board, (2) remove the requirement that the Executive Director of the Partnership be a full-time state employee, and (3) make minor changes to the definitions and mission of the Partnership to conform with the current practices and funding of the National Rural Development Partnership, 7 U.S. Code Section 2008m. He further explained the Idaho Rural Development Partnership Act will have no impact to the General Fund. The Idaho Rural Partnership frequently operates solely on donated federal and private sector grants and this re-authorization makes no changes to funding mechanisms or requirements.

MOTION: **Rep. VanOrden** made a motion to introduce **RS 24213. Motion carried by voice vote.**

Blain Jacobson, Executive Director of Idaho Wheat Commission, presented the annual report to the committee. Cash receipts for Idaho wheat were down 17% in 2015 from 2014, due to rain damage crop. Acreage for 2016 is up. Wheat ranks as Idaho's second largest crop and is grown in 42 of Idaho's 44 counties. Idaho is known to have some of the highest yields per acre of any state. Idaho is the largest grower of organic wheat in the United States. The top customers for U.S. wheat are Japan, Nigeria and Mexico. A challenge for the wheat markets is the rise in non- wheat diets. Although he did recognize there are those who do have legitimate reasons to avoid wheat products, several of the claims are non scientific and proven to be false.

Mr. Jacobson explained the importance of the Snake and Columbia Rivers in getting wheat to market. Over 17% of all U.S. wheat travels by barge on these two rivers. He also addressed the need to be responsible for protecting the fish, including the salmon along these river routes. The survival rates through hydro systems are now approaching levels seen in rivers without dams.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

Representative Andrus
Chair

Joan Majors
Secretary