

MINUTES
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, January 28, 2016

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Brackett, Vice Chairman Hagedorn, Senators Keough, Winder, Nonini, Vick, Den Hartog and Lacey

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Buckner-Webb

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 Brackett** convened the meeting of the Senate Transportation Committee (Committee) at 1:30 p.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Lacey** moved to approve the Minutes of the January 14, 2016, meeting. **Vice Chairman Hagedorn** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Chairman Brackett passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Hagedorn.

RS 24301 **Vice Chairman Hagedorn** asked Chairman Brackett to present **RS 24301**. **Chairman Brackett** said this legislation authorized 129,000-pound-load trucks to operate on Idaho's Interstate Highway System. It aligns state law with the federal legislation that passed Congress in December 2015 that lifted the prohibition on these heavy trucks from operating on Idaho's Interstate Highway System. **Chairman Brackett** urged the Committee to have this RS printed and stood for questions. There were no questions.

MOTION: **Senator Lacey** moved to print **RS 24301**. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

PASSED THE GAVEL: Vice Chairman Hagedorn returned the gavel to Chairman Brackett.

RS 24240 **Chairman Brackett** thanked Vice Chairman Hagedorn and asked Senator Den Hartog to present the next RS.

Senator Den Hartog said the increased transportation revenue concept in **RS 24240** was considered in last year's transportation funding legislation 2015 H 312aaS,aaS, but it did not make it into the final version of that legislation. **RS 24240** removes the Idaho State Police's (ISP) 5 percent distribution of revenue collected for the Highway Distribution Account (HDA) formula effective July 1, 2016. **Senator Den Hartog** said the tax on fuel should all go to the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD). She asked for the Committee's support to send **RS 24240** to print and stood for questions, but there were none.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Hagedorn** moved to print **RS 24240**. **Senator Vick** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

RS 24184 **Chairman Brackett** thanked Senator Den Hartog and welcomed Senator Patrick to the Committee and asked him to present his RS.

Senator Patrick said that this legislation removes the requirement of needing a front license plate on automobiles. Many manufacturers no longer provide an insert space on the front of new vehicles for license plates, and 20 states do not require front license plates by law. Idaho does not require front plates on motorcycles, dealer cars and some other off-road vehicles. **Senator Patrick** thinks it is simpler to not require them on any vehicles. He thanked the Committee and stood for questions.

Vice Chairman Hagedorn was concerned with the fiscal note. He thought that the savings of not having to mail two license plates should be reflected. **Senator Patrick** said that the cost reduction would be passed on to the consumer. He would look at the fiscal note and work with ITD to accurately reflect costs savings. There were no further questions.

MOTION: **Senator Vick** moved to print **RS 24184**. **Senator Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

INTRODUCTION: **Chairman Brackett** thanked Senator Patrick and welcomed Kent Goldthorpe, President of the Ada County Highway District (ACHD) Board of Commissioners, to the Committee and asked him to introduce today's presenter.

Mr. Goldthorpe thanked the Committee and said he was relatively new to ACHD and was currently serving as the 2016 President of the ACHD Board of Commissioners. He recognized two other ACHD Board Commissioners, ACHD's Director Bruce Wong and members of Mr. Wong's staff who were in the audience. He said that ACHD is grateful for their community partnerships, including the one with the Idaho Legislature. He said that Mr. Wong would share information about ACHD's stewardship of the funds the State of Idaho had entrusted to them and their vision for the future of ACHD. He concluded by saying that he would speak briefly to the Committee following Mr. Wong's presentation.

PRESENTATION: **Chairman Brackett** thanked Mr. Goldthorpe and welcomed Mr. Wong to make his presentation on ACHD to the Committee.

Mr. Wong thanked the Committee for doing a great job last year in providing funding for highways. ACHD's mission is to drive quality transportation for all of Ada County. He said he was accompanied by experts from his staff who could clarify any claims he or the commissioners make during the course of the presentation. He would briefly touch on ACHD history, what happened in 2015, the current state of ACHD in 2016 and their plans moving forward.

ACHD was established in 1971 and is governed by a five-member elected Board of Commissions that is responsible for more than \$3 billion in assets and 331.5 full-time employees. They support six cities and more than 436,000 customers in Ada County. ACHD maintains more than 4,783 total lane-miles of roadways, 764 bridges, 428 traffic signals, 338 cameras and the Traffic Management Center. It owns and operates a headquarters building, two major industrial centers, a fleet of 420 vehicles and heavy equipment valued at \$25 million, several gravel pits, the Commuterride public transit system, a laboratory and the largest storm water drain system in Idaho.

Mr. Wong continued to the next topic by stating that 2015 was a very good year for ACHD. They met many of their goals and received awards for some of the best roads for a metropolitan area in the country and for administrative excellence. Safety, injuries and costs were down, while savings were up. ACHD grew its Commuterride public transit system participation by 16 percent and they implemented \$1.3 million in safe sidewalk improvements.

For 2016, ACHD is expecting no increase in property tax certification or in new growth tax revenue. The additional funds from 2015 H312aaS,aaS in 2016 will be used for roadway and bridge maintenance. It is estimated to be \$5.5 million in additional revenue in fiscal year 2016 and \$6.4 million in additional revenue in fiscal year 2017. That amount will remain the same in each year moving forward.

Mr. Wong talked about the challenges the future holds for ACHD. The growth planned for Ada County and the Treasure Valley is significant and has a huge impact on ACHD's responsibility to maintain the roadway system and manage congestion. ACHD is basically projecting adding another Boise to Ada County over the next 20 years. ACHD will need to steadily-increase revenue to maintain the system. In 2015, ACHD added nearly 68 lane miles to its system. This means longer commutes and reduced air quality. As the system grows, the need to enhance the ACHD system to manage the traffic congestion increases.

Mr. Wong concluded by talking about various jurisdictions and projects within the ACHD system. **Mr. Wong** thanked the Committee and offered to answer any questions after Mr. Goldthorpe concluded his closing remarks.

Mr. Goldthorpe mentioned Mr. Wong's earlier remarks about the challenges facing ACHD regarding increases in demands and limited resources. He offered projections from the Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS) that showed population in the Treasure Valley doubling while anticipated growth in available transportation infrastructure remaining limited to unchanged. He was particularly focused on the city of Meridian Department of Parks and Recreation where he served as a commissioner. He spoke of a large project to establish a greenbelt pathway either within or alongside the railroad right-of-way. He went into great detail about efforts to establish this project by working with various community partners and cited examples of what other cities had accomplished. He asked if the Legislature and the Committee in particular would consider becoming a partner on this project in the form of providing a letter of support for Meridian's project. **Mr. Goldthorpe** thanked the Committee for their consideration and stood for questions.

Senator Den Hartog said that the Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC) had consolidated some highway districts and asked if there was a role for consolidation within Ada County. She said she had overhead and equipment costs in mind. **Mr. Goldthorpe** said he could show her what the consolidation in Ada County has done to form ACHD and how it might work from a technical aspect. **Mr. Wong** said that what works in Ada County doesn't always work in other counties. Those counties need to make those decisions.

Vice Chairman Hagedorn observed from briefly perusing ACHD's website that the cost of maintenance per mile was \$8,000 this year, whereas last year it was more than twice that at \$16,000 per mile and he wanted to know why. **Mr. Wong** said it was a factor of Mother Nature and the new chip-seal program. Last year the weather was far worse and they used some procedures last year that they discovered didn't need to be done. There were no further questions.

Chairman Brackett thanked Mr. Goldthorpe and Mr. Wong for their very enlightening presentation to the Committee.

ADJOURNED:

With no further business before the Committee, **Chairman Brackett** adjourned the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

Senator Brackett
Chair

Gaye Bennett
Secretary