



FOOD PRODUCERS of IDAHO, Inc.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FURTHER INFORMATION
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UNIQUE COLLABORATION EMPOWERS RURAL IDAHO COMMUNITIES

Boise - Food Producers of Idaho, representing over 40 commodity & farm organizations in Idaho and the Pacific Northwest, supports H417 in the Idaho State Legislature. The bill includes amendments that will update and renew the Idaho Rural Partnership Development Act.

The Idaho Rural Partnership (IRP) was established as Idaho's rural development council in 1991. IRP's mission is to join diverse public and private resources in innovative collaborations that strengthen communities and improve life in rural Idaho.

IRP is governed by a 32-member board of directors with representatives from the Idaho Legislature, federal and state government, universities, local communities, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector.

IRP is best known for coordinating the Idaho Community Review program. Reviews have been conducted in 35 rural Idaho communities since 2000. Each review consists of a 2-3 day visit and assessment from 10-15 community and economic development professionals who donate their time and pay their own travel and lodging costs.

Food Producers of Idaho and the Idaho Rural Partnership recognize that a strong agricultural sector and successful, economically vibrant rural communities are vital to Idaho's future. H417 will help achieve this goal.

See more IRP news at www.irp.idaho.gov

Visit the IRP Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/IdahoCommunityReview/>

IRP Contacts:
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IDAHO RURAL PARTNERSHIP

COMMUNITY REVIEWS

COMMUNITIES VISITED:

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|------------------------|
| Aberdeen | Fairfield | New Meadows |
| American Falls | Glenns Ferry | Nez Perce Tribe-Lapwai |
| Arco | Gooding | Payette |
| Ashton | Grand View | Preston |
| Bonnars Ferry | Hayden | Priest River |
| Buhl | Heyburn | Rexburg |
| Driggs | Jerome | Rigby |
| Dubois | Kamiah | Salmon |
| Emmett | Kooskia | Sandpoint |
| | Kootenai | Silver Valley |
| | Kuna | Soda Springs |
| | Mackay | St. Maries |
| | Malad City | Stanley |
| | | Weiser |



Organizational Structure of the National Rural Development Partnership



Committed to the future of rural communities.

National Rural Development Council



State Rural Development Councils



Idaho's Rural Development Council



Local Economic Development and Host Committees



Association of Idaho Cities
3100 South Vista, Suite 310, Boise, Idaho 83705
Telephone (208) 344-8594
Fax (208) 344-8677
www.idahocities.org

Dear Members of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee,

The Association of Idaho Cities (AIC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit member support organization formed by Idaho cities in 1947. The association provides technical assistance, educational training, and legislative advocacy on behalf of Idaho's 200 cities. As a representative of municipal government in the state of Idaho, I am appointed by the Governor to serve on the Idaho Rural Partnership Board of Directors. Also, in the spirit of collaboration that is at the heart of the Idaho Rural Partnership, AIC contributes meeting space and conference call services to IRP's efforts.

AIC appreciates your consideration of House Bill 417 and urges you to support its passage. House Bill 417 consists of clarifying and updating amendments to the Idaho Rural Partnership Development Act (Chapter 90, Title 67, Idaho Code). We believe passage of House Bill 417 will help the Idaho Rural Partnership fulfill its responsibility to advise the Governor and Legislature, improve intergovernmental coordination, act as an information clearinghouse on rural programs and policies, and conduct direct outreach *in* our rural communities. Collectively, these activities help make our rural communities stronger and more resilient.

We see firsthand how many of our rural member communities have identified and acted on community and economic development opportunities through their participation in IRP's Community Review Program.

Please take AIC's support into account as you consider passage of House Bill 417.

Sincerely,



Seth Grigg

Executive Director

Partners for Rural America and State Rural Development Councils

The Partners for Rural America (PRA) is the national organization of State Rural Development Councils:
Working together to improve the quality of life in rural America.

A Brief History on the National Rural Development Partnership and State Rural Development Councils

The concept for a federally supported network of State Rural Development Councils (SRDCs) was initiated by the National Governors Association during President George H. Bush's administration. Non-partisan and multi-sectorial Councils formed through the 1990s and their success led to further statutory authority when the U.S. Congress included the National Rural Development Partnership (NRDP) in the 2002 Farm Bill. USDA RD facilitated a process that certified State Rural Development Councils that met the standards for composition and decision-making set forth in federal law, and today State Councils are leading community and economic development efforts in support of rural communities in states throughout the United States.

The NRDP was reauthorized in the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills. While no federal resources have been allocated to SRDCs since the mid-2000s, State Councils have received USDA and other federal agency grants for a range of project and programmatic activities. A number of State governments also provide financial and in-kind support to the SRDCs to assist with the facilitative rural program and policy coordination work that they undertake locally and statewide.

The State Rural Development Councils help local communities define their core assets and challenges, identify key long term priorities for development, collaborate to advance local initiatives and seek affordable alternatives. The work of Councils helps coordinate requests for federal and state funds and minimize regulatory redundancy – important reasons why Congress has continued to authorize State Councils in the Farm Bill since 2002.





About the State Rural Development Councils

Pursuant to federal law, the State Councils are neutral, nonpartisan organizations composed of representatives from all levels of government, community and regional nonprofit organizations, and the private sector. State USDA mission area offices are nearly always participants, as are a varying mix of other federal agencies. This multi-stakeholder collaborative structure creates the best possible atmosphere to help citizens and policy-makers in rural areas develop vitality-improving projects and initiatives, reduce regulatory and other barriers, address their community needs and build confidence in the local and regional development process. Rural areas often have an overburdened local leadership and overworked county/municipal government staffs. The State Councils serve an essential need as an experienced convener and vehicle for collaboration between USDA, other Federal agencies, state agencies, the nonprofit community and the private sector. This helps the rural areas address their needs, grow their communities, create jobs and provide essential infrastructure while reducing duplication of government efforts and efficiently overlapping planning and funding assistance.

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The SRDCs bring together diverse interest groups to build on local community assessments and strategic plans – both to set new directions in policy and program development and to use resources wisely in times of scarcity. The State Councils can tap the large network of experienced staff from other State Councils across the country to implement best practices, obtain technical assistance, determine funding sources and assist local leaders with community development. This information (gathered nationally) helps members of Congress identify and respond to needs through policy coordination and direction, proposed regulatory changes, targeted resources and private sector partnerships.

Many State Councils also take an active leadership in state rural summits and conferences generating a positive, nonpartisan climate for genuine advancement of policy issues, collaboration, best practices, attraction of resources and building of rural leadership capacity.