

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 06, 2017
TIME: 1:30 P.M.
PLACE: Room EW42
MEMBERS: Chairman Boyle, Vice Chairman Dayley, Representatives Bell, Miller, VanOrden, Burtenshaw, Kerby, Troy, Stevenson, Amador, Armstrong, Hanks, Zito, Erpelding, Toone
**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None
GUESTS: Brent Olmstead, CALS; Roger Batt, Treasure Valley Water Users Association; Argia Phillips, Batt Association; Dan Steenson, Sawtooth Law; Norm Semanko, Idaho Water Users Association; Jim Lowe, U of I Ag Econ Tour; Dan Panther, AG; John Mckinney, AG; Tanner Beymer, Wittmeyer and Associates; Benjamin Kelly, Food Producers of Idaho; Wyatt Prescott, ICH; Rick Waitley, Food Producers; Lynn Tominaga, IGWA

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

Chairman Boyle welcomed the members of the University of Idaho Ag Economic Policy Tour to the committee meeting.

Roger Batt, Executive Director of the Treasure Valley Water Users, introduced **Dan Steenson**, Sawtooth Law, who addressed the committee concerning Treasure Valley agriculture water quality challenges. He said in 1990, a lawsuit was filed which stated Idaho was not meeting its obligation to the Clean Water Act by not addressing water quality standards in water shed throughout the State of Idaho. That led to a schedule being developed called Total Maximum of Daily Loads for thousands of water bodies in the State of Idaho. He explained TMDL represents a determination of the amount of loading of a pollutant a water body can receive without exceeding water quality standards. He said whereas cities are required to meet TMDL standards under the Clean Water Act, irrigated agriculture is not under the same requirement and their participation is voluntary. Even though it is voluntary, the state is required to prepare implementation plans showing a capability of meeting TMDL goals with reasonable assurance agriculture can meet their portion.

Mr. Steenson said we have an urgent need to support agriculture in meeting their reduction goals. The concern is if these goals are not met, they may begin to regulate and force compliance. He explained matching grants and the process to apply for them but stressed there is still a great need for more funding.

In response to a committee question, **Mr. Steenson** said the program now in place here is easily duplicated in other cities and areas of the state. A partnership of agriculture and TMDL was formed several years ago and has been very effective.

Erik Nelson, concerned citizen, explained to the committee the history of hemp legislation. He said in 1970, the Controlled Substance Act set a legal distinction between hemp and marijuana. Despite this, the DEA set an administrative ban on hemp products in 1999, finalized in 2003. In 2004 this ban was struck down by the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals establishing hemp products as legal. Despite this ruling, the State of Idaho does not legally separate hemp from marijuana. He said there are 32 states who now have defined industrial hemp as being distinct from marijuana, seven states have hemp research crops as of 2015 and five states have licenses or registration to grow hemp. He explained there are over 25,000 applications or uses from the hemp plant including animal feed, fiber board, ethanol fuel and textiles just to name a few. He explained the conditions for ideal growth, harvesting time frame and equipment needed which is similar equipment common to corn and soybean harvesting. He said from here we need to amend Title 37 to be compliant; then work with our experts at Idaho Universities to make this into a reality.

In response to a committee question, **Mr. Nelson** explained Australia, Holland, France, Canada and China are all growing hemp for export at this time.

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

Representative Boyle
Chair

Joan Majors
Secretary