

MINUTES  
**HOUSE RESOURCES & CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, February 27, 2017

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW40

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Gibbs, Vice Chairman Gestrin, Representative(s) Moyle, Raybould, Shepherd, Wood, Boyle, Vander Woude, Miller, Burtenshaw, Mendive, Youngblood, Kauffman, Giddings, Blanksma, Erpelding, Rubel, Jordan

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Moyle, Vander Woude, Rubel

**GUESTS:** Norm Semanko, Idaho Water Users Association; Bill Haagenson, Idaho Department of Lands; Roger Batt and Argia Phillips, Treasure Valley Water Users Association; Dan Steenson, Nampa and Meridian Irrigation District; Brent Olmstead, University of Idaho-College of Agricultural and Life Sciences; Len Young, C-PTPA; Jane Wittmeyer, Wittmeyer Associates

**Chairman Gibbs** called the meeting to order at 1:30pm.

**S 1063:** **Norm Semanko**, Executive Director, Idaho Water Users Association, stated this legislation ensures State lands entitled to water rights and drainage benefits apportioned by irrigation districts are subject to irrigation district assessments to pay for the costs of constructing, operating, and maintaining district water delivery and drainage systems. Mr. Semanko explained at one time it was assumed that State lands couldn't receive irrigation benefits, but in 1924, the Idaho Supreme Court decided that State lands located within irrigation districts were entitled to water rights and drainage benefits, so the State began paying, and has continued to pay, its share of irrigation assessments to the appropriate irrigation districts. It was recently discovered this statute was never corrected to reflect that court decision so this amendment now removes the State exemption from assessments language. Without the State paying its share of the irrigation assessments, the financial burden would shift to the private landowners.

**Roger Batt**, representing Treasure Valley Water Users Association, stated they are **in support** of this legislation.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Raybould** made a motion to send **S 1063** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Raybould** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

**Len Young**, Chief Fire Warden, Clearwater-Potlatch Timber Protective Association, introduced himself and provided an informational presentation on Idaho's Timber Protective Associations. The Association was established in 1927 and was formed for the purpose of furnishing, operating, and maintaining a protective system for the detection, prevention, and suppression of forest or range fires in Idaho. The Association is managed by a Board of Directors elected annually from the membership. They maintain a fleet of equipment including fire suppression trucks, heavy equipment, a boat, and an airplane and regularly provide training to the Association personnel. The State is divided into 14 Forest Protective Districts. The Timber Protective Associations currently provide wildland fire protection in two of those Forest Protective Districts which includes private, state, federal, and a small portion of non-assessed (range and farm) lands. In the last 15 years, the Clearwater-Potlatch and Southern Idaho Timber Protective Associations managed 1,356 fires totalling 7,625 acres burned. Although the average number of acres

burned per year in that 15-year period was 544 acres, it was noted that 62% of the total burned acres occurred in 2015, a very high fire year.

**ADJOURN:**

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:04pm.

---

Representative Gibbs  
Chair

---

Tracey McDonnell  
Secretary