

MINUTES  
**SENATE RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, March 13, 2017

**TIME:** 1:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Bair, Vice Chairman Vick, Senators Siddoway, Heider, Bayer, Johnson, Stennett, and Jordan

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Brackett

**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 Bair** called the Senate Resources and Environment Committee (Committee) meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

**MINUTES:** **Vice Chairman Vick** moved to approve the Minutes of February 22, 2017. **Senator Siddoway** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**Senator Jordan** moved to approve the Minutes of February 27, 2017. **Senator Heider** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**Senator Johnson** moved to approve the Minutes of March 1, 2017. **Vice Chairman Vick** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**H 211** **Representative Gestrin** said this legislation increases the invasive species sticker fee for non-residents from \$22.00 to \$30.00. After administration fees and vendor fees are deducted, approximately \$70,000 would be added to the Invasive Species Fund. **Representative Gestrin** said the Working Group found that out-of-state boaters are the greater risk to Idaho's waterways.

**Representative Erpelding** stated that the increase in the invasive species sticker fee will help the check stations and asked the Committee for their support.

**MOTION:** **Senator Siddoway** moved that **H 211** be sent to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Stennett** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Stennett will be the floor sponsor.

**HJM 04** **Representative Gestrin** presented **HJM 04**. As a member of the Working Group, **Representative Gestrin** said they recognized the need to cooperate with other states that have a problem with quagga mussels, as well as cooperation with the federal government. **Representative Gestrin** said this memorial encourages other states to join Idaho in cooperation with the federal government to stop the spread of mussels.

**MOTION:** **Senator Heider** moved that **HJM 04** be sent to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Vice Chairman Vick** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Heider will be the floor sponsor.

**Sharon Kiefer**, Deputy Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), presented this legislation dealing with set-aside accounts. **Ms. Kiefer** said that currently in Idaho Code, there is a fish and game set-aside account in the dedicated fund that has monies paid into it from a variety of permits, licenses, and tags essentially "ear-marked" to support certain functions. This bill deals with the set-aside from steelhead trout or anadromous salmon permits to support important work for salmon and steelhead management such as providing boat ramps, parking lots, and sanitation facilities for fishermen. Salmon and steelhead fishing opportunity and management needs have evolved considerably in geography, time of year, and runs of salmon, in particular, that may offer fishing opportunity and thus, the focus on this particular set-aside.

**Ms. Kiefer** stated that section 1 deals with the set-aside from regular salmon and steelhead permits. Currently, \$4.00 of every resident and nonresident salmon and steelhead permit is directed to the set-aside account. Sportsmen have communicated they want a different paradigm- a proportional set-aside rather than a flat fee that will keep pace if fees change in the future. **Ms. Kiefer** said that essentially, with the current flat fee, sportsmen feel that the set-aside has lost "buying power" and in fact, IDFG spends additional discretionary license dollars to fund some of the set-aside functions.

Revenue from resident salmon and steelhead permits are the bread and butter of this set-aside. IDFG sold just over 35,000 permits in FY16. IDFG also sold about 6,100 regular nonresident salmon and steelhead permits and just over 9,800 three-day fishing with salmon and steelhead permits in FY16.

**Ms. Kiefer** said that IDFG evaluated the proposal to move to a proportional, rather than a flat fee set-aside. Because only the salmon and steelhead permits are affected and the prices between resident and nonresident are not substantially disparate, IDFG believes that they can feasibly administer this approach. **Ms. Kiefer** said that with this change, the set-aside would increase to 50 percent from the current 31 percent of a resident permit and the current 16 percent of a nonresident permit.

It is estimated the increase in annual revenue to the set-aside would be about \$270,000 with a corollary decrease to the fish and game account. This bill has no effect on the price of salmon and steelhead permits; it is just redistribution of fish and game funds.

**Ms. Kiefer** said section 2 on page 3 of the bill modifies the set-aside from the eighth class license, commonly called a Sportsman's Pack. Because of the complexity of this type of license with multiple discounted products, IDFG felt it most appropriate to just retain the current flat fee approach to the set-aside and increase it for consistency. Revenue from the resident salmon and steelhead permits in the Sportsman's Pack accounts for less than the regular permits; there were 21,000 sold in FY16.

**Ms. Kiefer** stated that the Fish and Game Commission supports this bill and requests a do pass recommendation.

**Senator Siddoway** asked if more money would go into the steelhead and salmon operations and what other programs would get less. **Ms. Kiefer** said the reality is that IDFG is spending some of the discretionary monies in the fish and game account for these functions. So, instead of spending out of the fish and game account, the money is redistributed to the salmon and steelhead account and will be more transparent as to what it takes to manage salmon and steelhead.

Written testimony was submitted by Butch Suor, Stites, Idaho, supporting **H 168**.

**WRITTEN  
TESTIMONY:**

**MOTION:** **Senator Siddoway** moved that **H 168** be sent to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Heider** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Jordan will be the floor sponsor.

**H 230** **Virgil Moore**, Director, IDFG, presented **H 230**. **Director Moore** said this bill arose when Chairman Gibbs of the House Resources and Conservation Committee returned two RSs to the Fish and Game Commission in January without a print hearing and encouraged the Commission and the IDFG to address concerns that the proposals did not do enough to address private land depredation by wildlife.

**Director Moore** stated that he believes **H 230** takes significant steps to both address the depredation concern and deliver important outcomes for sportsmen and landowners. **H 230** has four themes:

1. Dedicated revenue to compensate and prevent wildlife depredation on private land;
2. Revisions to improve flexibility and responsiveness of the compensation claims program to landowner operations;
3. New financial resources for sportsmen access programs; and
4. New revenue for the broader portfolio of fish and game programs.

Attached is Director Moore's full testimony (attachment 1) and a brief technical summary of sections 1 through 12 of **H 230** (attachment 2). **Director Moore** said his testimony demonstrates benefits of this bill to both sportsmen and also other stakeholders across the State and asked that all move forward together. **Director Moore** asked for the Committee's do pass recommendation.

**TESTIMONY:** **Michael Gibson**, Idaho Field Coordinator, Trout Unlimited, testified in support of **H 230**. Trout Unlimited is made up of angler conservationists with a mission to conserve, protect, and restore Idaho's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. **Mr. Gibson** said Trout Unlimited applauds IDFG for thinking "outside the box" with their innovative price lock proposal. **Mr. Gibson** also stated that **H 230** strikes a balance with keeping up with increasing costs, effective management of Idaho's wildlife resources, protecting private landowners, increasing access opportunities, and rewarding loyal customers. **Mr. Gibson** asked for a do pass recommendation.

**TESTIMONY:** **Larry Fry**, President, Idaho Sportsmen's Alliance (ISA), and representing nearly 20,000 members, said they are in favor of **H 230**. **Mr. Fry** stated that today he is specifically representing the following groups: Pheasants Forever; Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; National Wildlife Turkey Federation; Idaho Hunter Education Association; and the Poachers Club. **Mr. Fry** said that one of ISA's guiding principles is to "support the long-term economic viability of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game."

**TESTIMONY:** **Josh Kuntz**, Cochairman of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, said that in conversations with the members, the general perception is that **H 230** is a step in the right direction and asked the Committee to support the bill.

**TESTIMONY:** **Brian Brooks**, representing the Idaho Wildlife Federation (IWF), said for multiple reasons, IWF asks for support of **H 230**. **Mr. Brooks** said that the bill addresses what some have considered a cumbersome process when it comes to assessing crop damages from wildlife. **Mr. Brooks** also said that if IDFG is not supported with the necessary capital investments, not only will Idaho lose its competitive edge in the United States sporting industry, but will pass to the next generation a State with less fish in the river, less elk on the mountain, and less pronghorn on the prairie.

**TESTIMONY:** **Forrest Goodrum**, Legislative Director, Ada County Fish and Game League, stated that they are in support of **H 230** and asked for a do pass recommendation from the Committee.

**TESTIMONY:** **Rob Thornberry** said he is from Idaho Falls and is here representing the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, a national non-profit organization, to amplify the voice of sportsmen in state wildlife issues and federal land policy. The end goal is healthy fish and wildlife populations and access to them. **Mr. Thornberry** said the Partnership is in favor of IDFG to be able to make decisions based on the best available information and they believe **H 230** sets in motion a process to make that happen. **Mr. Thornberry** asked that **H 230** be sent to the floor with a do pass recommendation.

**TESTIMONY:** **Dennis Tanikuni**, Assistant Director of Governmental Affairs, Idaho Farm Bureau (IFB), stated they celebrated their 77th anniversary and is Idaho's largest agricultural organization representing approximately 76,300 families. Of those families, about 60 percent are sportsmen. IFB supports **H 230** and the bill is consistent with IFB's policy #84 which requires IDFG to show specific need for use for funds in order to get support for a license or general fund fee increase. **Mr. Tanikuni** said that **H 230** addresses a number of other policies and said this is a big step forward for the IDFG. It is also an opportunity for mutual progress for sportsmen.

**TESTIMONY:** **Blake Fischer**, Idaho Fish and Game Commissioner, said he is proud to have worked on **H 230** and the Commission supports this bill.

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY:** Written testimony was submitted by Daniel M. Herrig stating that he strongly supports **H 211, H 168, H 230, and HJM 04** and that he has purchased hunting and fishing licenses in Idaho for over 40 years.

**MOTION:** **Senator Heider** moved that **H 230** be sent to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Stennett** seconded the motion.

**Senator Johnson** said he liked most everything in the bill, but is getting calls with concerns about the non expendable big game fund. In section 10 of the bill, the legislative intent is that the IDFG will come back and the Commission will submit a report to the Committee reflecting the results of the provisions of the price lock discount order. It would be beneficial to have an end date on the non expendable big game depredation fund to find out how it is working. **Senator Johnson** said he would like to know how the money is being spent. **Senator Johnson** said he has also heard some concerns about trying to find a better process to do the crop loss adjustments and suggested that maybe an independent third party or another state agency might be involved. **Senator Johnson** said he needed to spend more time on getting that information.

The motion carried by **voice vote**. Senator Bair will be the floor sponsor.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Bair** adjourned the meeting at 2:15 p.m.

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Senator Bair  
Chair

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Juanita Budell  
Secretary