

MINUTES
HOUSE RESOURCES & CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, March 05, 2018

TIME: 1:30pm or Upon Adjournment

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, Gannon(5)

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Moyle, Giddings, Erpelding, Rubel

GUESTS: Dennis Tanikuni and Braden Jensen, Idaho Farm Bureau; Sharon Kiefer and Toby Boudreau, Idaho Department of Fish and Game; Russ Westerberg, Rocky Mountain Power; Senator Abby Lee, District 9

Chairman Gibbs called the meeting to order at 3:18pm.

MOTION: **Rep. Kauffman** made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2018 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Chairman Gibbs returned **S 1275** to the committee for consideration, which was held from the meeting of March 1, 2018.

S 1275: **Rep. Kerby**, District 9, stated due to questions regarding Department of Fish and Game funding, this bill was held over in order to have Department representation present. Rep. Kerby yielded the podium to **Senator Abby Lee**.

Senator Lee, District 9, provided some background on this bill. She explained wolf collaring has been a part of the Wolf Management Plan since 2002, and has been funded through licensing. She stated collaring wolves directly links those wolves to depredation and also provides population data and locations and movement of packs that are preying on livestock. Senator Lee stated there was concern the Department of Fish and Game was moving away from collaring so she and the Representatives from District 9 met with the Department, who assured them collaring wolves was a critical tool they will continue to utilize. The collective thought among the Senator and Representatives from District 9 was to put this wolf collaring policy into statute.

Sharon Kiefer, Deputy Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, stated the Department conducted a technical review of **S 1275** and found no technical issues. They also agree the language in this bill is consistent with the 2002 Wolf Management Plan. Ms. Kiefer stated the Wolf Management Plan acknowledges collaring wolves is not the only tool, but rather one of the tools they use in proactive management for packs predisposed to depredation of livestock. Although they have no concerns with this bill, the Commission will not be taking a policy position.

In response to questions regarding the funding source for wolf collaring, **Ms. Kiefer** explained they have been conducting operations in the District 9 area due to the chronic depredation and the intensity occurring there. She stated they have been paying for that work out of a "predation budget" they created in-house as a result of the revenue benefits from **H 230**, in addition to the use of discretionary license funds. The "predation budget" is currently around \$200,000 and they anticipate this account will provide a long term funding source for this work. Ms. Kiefer stated they do evaluate the use of funds from the Sportsmen subaccount, which is overseen by the Wolf Depredation Control Board, including actions taken for managing elk herds in the Lolo Zone.

In response to questions regarding the costs of the wolf collaring program, **Ms. Kiefer** stated approximately \$65,000 has been spent in the Lolo Zone, and approximately \$52,000 has been spent in District 9. She indicated they anticipate the numbers to increase as they gain more information about the packs relative to chronic depredation.

Toby Boudreau, Assistant Chief of Wildlife, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, addressed the questions regarding the costs per collar and how long the collars last. He stated they mostly use satellite collars, which cost about \$1,000 each, and last on average two to three years, depending on how often they receive location signals from that collar. For ground trapping and collaring wolves, that activity runs about \$1,500 to \$2,000 per wolf. If they use forward-looking infrared with airplanes or helicopters, that costs about \$10,000 per wolf. This method is necessary in areas like District 9 due to the difficult terrain making it harder to locate wolves.

In summary, **Ms. Kiefer** assured the committee the wolf collaring program does not use funds in the access depredation account. The funding they use is from an in-house account the Department established with revenue benefits from **H 230**, in addition to discretionary license funds.

Dennis Tanikuni, representing the Idaho Farm Bureau, stated they are **in support** of this bill based on their policy number 93, which relates to wolves.

MOTION: **Rep. Wood** made a motion to send **S 1275** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Kerby** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

S 1305: **Senator Harris**, District 32, stated this bill amends existing law to provide that when a federal grazing permit is transferred or otherwise conveyed to a new owner, the associated stockwater rights may also be conveyed for use of the water for livestock. And, upon approval of the transfer, those water rights shall be an appurtenance to the new owner's base property.

Braden Jensen, representing Idaho Farm Bureau, stated they are **in support** of this bill.

MOTION: **Rep. Blanksma** made a motion to send **S 1305** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Boyle** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:53pm.

Representative Gibbs
Chair

Tracey McDonnell
Secretary