

MINUTES  
**SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, February 13, 2020

**TIME:** 8:00 A.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW53

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Guthrie, Senators Patrick, Harris, Lent, Bayer, Jordan, and Nelson

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Vice Chairwoman Den Hartog and Senator Mortimer

**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 Guthrie** called the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee (Committee) to order at 8:01 a.m.

**PAGE FAREWELL:** **Chairman Guthrie** thanked the page, Moses Brown, for his excellent work during the session. **Mr. Brown** stated that this had been the best experience of his life and explained his overall goal will be to find a career which helps others. Chairman Guthrie presented Mr. Brown with a token of the Committee's appreciation.

**S 1291** **Senator Brackett** presented **S 1291**, which to changes the authority of nominating Members to the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission (Commission). He said there are three different entities that nominate and submit names for members to the Commission, one of which is the Idaho Rangeland Committee (IRC). He said the IRC has become inactive and is no longer in existence. The proposed legislation will designate other entities to nominate and submit names for the IRC's two seats. The bill names the Partners Advisory Council (PAC) of the University of Idaho Rangeland Center and the Commission to each nominate and submit one name for one of the two seats formerly nominated by the IRC. He said **S 1291** updates the statute to reflect current practices.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Harris** asked why the IRC became inactive. **Senator Brackett** replied when the Commission was formed, it assumed some of the duties of the IRC. The blended resources and limited number of people working in the variety of organizations caused the IRC to become obsolete.

**MOTION:** **Senator Nelson** moved to send **S 1291** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Jordan** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**PRESENTATION:** **Stacey Satterlee**, Executive Director, Idaho Grain Producers Association (IGP), introduced Paul Arrington, Executive Director, Idaho Water Users Association (IWU), to begin the presentation.

**Mr. Arrington** detailed the founding and composition of the IWU. He said IWU provided a united voice on issues relating to Idaho's waters and the salmon and steelhead recovery. He spoke about the four current issues that IWU is addressing: 1.) Columbia River System Operations; 2.) Columbia Basin Partnership; 3.) Governor's Salmon Workgroup; and 4.) Washington Governor's Orca Taskforce. He gave an overview of the river system's significant value to Idaho's economy and spoke about the Boise, Minidoka, Owyhee, and Palisades projects' contributions to crops, livestock, power, flood prevention, and recreation.

**Mr. Arrington** explained the Snake River Water Rights Agreement which came about from tribal claims and spoke about the specifics of the agreement. He talked about flow augmentation and the benefits to the salmon and steelhead migration. He concluded his presentation by detailing the water users benefits from IWU.

**Will Hart**, Executive Director, Idaho Consumer-Owned Utilities Association (ICUA), explained to the Committee the principals and the regional areas the ICUA serves. He highlighted the low cost and low regulations associated with ICUA power. He emphasized the importance of hydropower and its benefits to customers and the climate. He reported that hydropower is a consistent power source and noted its ability to increase power flow as needed during peak demands for energy. He spoke about the funding received from consumers to aid with fish and wildlife mitigation.

**Ms. Satterlee** presented "Moving Wheat from Idaho to Consumers Around the World," which highlighted the wheat industry's economic impact to Idaho. She explained the Port of Lewiston's effect of the exporting on Idaho and Washington wheat. She showed the Committee a video that highlighted the transportation of wheat in a barge down the Columbia-Snake River water system. She explained that barging wheat is one of the most environmentally friendly modes of transportation available.

**Ms. Satterlee** reported the amount of tonnage barged and what that would equate to if loaded onto railcars and semi-trucks. She reported the negative consequences that ground transportation would have on the environment if the dams were breached. She spoke about the importance of exporting the wheat and reported the number of countries that currently purchase Idaho wheat. She emphasized the importance of barging as a way to keep costs contained which helps with exporting.

**Dave Doeringsfeld**, General Manager, Port of Lewiston, Idaho's only seaport, presented a study that had been completed by the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association (PNWA). The report reviewed the implications of breaching the lower Snake River Dams and the impact it would have on moving commodities up and down the Snake River water system. He detailed the millions of cargo tonnage that is transported on the Snake River water system. He warned the Committee of the exorbitant costs associated with breaching the dams and the harm it would do to family farms, the environment, and the cost of wheat.

**Mr. Doeringsfeld** explained the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' program in 1992 to reduce the river flow and the negative impact to Lewiston, Idaho and Clarkston, Washington. That program revealed the important work of dams to ensure the continued river flow. He concluded his presentation by highlighting the expansion of the tourism industry due to the opportunities the river provides (see attachment 1 and 2).

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Guthrie** adjourned the meeting at 8:51 a.m.

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Senator Jim Guthrie  
Chair

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LeAnn Mohr  
Secretary