

MINUTES
SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Tuesday, February 25, 2020
- TIME:** 8:00 A.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW53
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Guthrie, Vice Chairman Den Hartog, Senators Patrick, Harris, Mortimer, Lent, Bayer, Jordan, and Nelson
- ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** None
- 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.
- MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Lent** moved to approve the Minutes of February 6, 2020. **Vice Chairwoman Den Hartog** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
Vice Chairwoman Den Hartog moved to approve the Minutes of February 11, 2020. **Senator Jordan** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.
- PRESENTATION:** **Karianne Fallow**, CEO, Idaho Dairy Products Commission, presented Dairy Checkoff (Checkoff): A Brief History and Operational Overview, Impact for Farmers. She detailed the Dairy West (DW) program and relayed the mission, vision, and values of the organization. She spoke about the program, Checkoff, and detailed the role Checkoff has with dairy farmers. **Ms. Fallow** reviewed the promotional history of dairy, nutritional benefits, consumption figures, the impact dairy has on the economy, and showed a video which highlighted those points. She concluded her presentation by reviewing the five points of DW's strategic plan (see attachment 1).
- DISCUSSION:** In response to Committee questions, **Ms. Fallow** explained fluid milk's competition with other "on the go" drink products and spoke about the competitive new milk products and packaging that are being developed. She said they work with other agriculture groups to go into schools and teach about the agricultural industry.
- PRESENTATION:** **Teri Murrison**, Administrator, Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (Commission), presented the Commission's annual update. She explained the role the Commission has in promoting conservation efforts in the state. She detailed the administrative overview, the funding revenues and expenditures, and the core objectives of the Commission. **Ms. Murrison** reported the information about the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, the Ground Water Quality Program, Resource Conservation and Range Development Program, and the implementation plans as outlined by the Department of Environmental Quality. She spoke about the outreach efforts which included the use of social media and reported the work of the Conservation the Idaho Way Project Tracker. She concluded her presentation stating the Commission helps connect agricultural stewardship for conservation districts, conservation partners, and private landowners for environmentally-sound agriculture practices (see attachment 2)

DISCUSSION: In response to Senator Jordan's question, **Ms. Murrison** replied that she did not know if the responsibilities of the Carbon Sequestration Advisory Committee and the Snake River Improvements Commission, which were eliminated by **S 1246**, have been absorbed by the Commission, and would follow-up with the Senator.

Senator Lent stated he would help work to find the answers for Senator Jordan.

In response to Senator Harris' question, **Ms. Murrison** replied that the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (Program) has been influenced by some external conditions and is currently steady. She explained that the Program members are trying make it more attractive for landowners to participate, but when commodity prices are up, the Program is no longer attractive.

Chairman Guthrie reminded Ms. Murrison that the annual report includes all the good and all the bad. He addressed the issue that there is one district with some legal problems. He asked that it get resolved in a timely manner and reminded her that the people who serve, serve as volunteers.

SJM 110 **Senator Harris** presented **SJM 110**; Relating to the Columbia-Snake River Water System. He said the purpose of the memorial is to emphasize the importance of the Port of Lewiston and the Columbia-Snake River (River) water system to the economy and livelihood of Idaho citizens. He explained Idaho's agricultural rankings in the West and the importance of the River to Idaho wheat farmers. **Senator Harris** detailed barge transportation and compared the load amounts to rail and semi-truck transportation. He spoke about the dams' benefit of clean, renewable, and flexible energy. He concluded by relaying the story of a tugboat owner and how the River impacts most citizens.

Chairman Guthrie stated that memorials are not required to have a public hearing however Senator Harris pulled it back to the Committee to give the public an opportunity to testify to **SJM 110**.

TESTIMONY: **Brett Slaughter**, Intern, Idaho Grain Producers, spoke in support of **SJM 110**. He explained the impact wheat has on Idaho's economy and the importance of the River to get the wheat to the consumer.

Will Hart, Executive Director, Consumer Utilities Commission (Commission), spoke in favor of **SJM 110**. He explained the merits of the dams and explained how the proposed memorial addresses the interests of the Commission.

Jonathan Oppenheimer, External Relations Director, Idaho Conservation League, spoke in opposition to **SJM 110**. He spoke about the ongoing concerns regarding increased power rates to consumers, declining salmon populations, aging dam structures, and transportation. He said regional leaders are writing their governors to encourage them to start new dialogue about the dams. He said the memorial is more about the history of the dams rather than the future of the rivers.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Harris** said the purpose of the memorial is for the people that the River affects. The language in the memorial asks for sound science for the future of the River.

MOTION: **Senator Mortimer** moved to send **SJM 110** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Patrick** seconded the motion.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Jordan** thanked Senator Harris for bringing **SJM 110** back to Committee for testimony because of the importance of the issue. She said her concern is that this memorial asks the Legislature to take a position opposing the removal or breaching of any dams on the River prior to the results from a workgroup that has been analyzing dams' impact to the River. She said this is too strong of a policy position to be in a resolution.

VOICE VOTE: The motion to send **SJM 110** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation passed by **voice vote**. **Senator Jordan** asked to be recorded as voting nay.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Guthrie** adjourned the meeting at 8:55 a.m.

Senator Jim Guthrie
Chair

LeAnn Mohr
Secretary