

MINUTES
SENATE RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 26, 2020

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW55

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Heider, Vice Chairman Brackett, Senators Bair, Mortimer, Patrick, Guthrie, Stennett, and Jordan

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Senator Johnson

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

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT: The Gubernatorial Appointment of Brian Beckley to the Idaho Parks and Recreation Board.

Brian Beckley introduced himself and his background, and informed the Committee that he has loved the outdoors since he was young, especially hunting, fishing, and hiking. He is the Chief Operations Officer of Biomark, Inc., a fish and wildlife company that works with endangered species.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Stennett** inquired about the work of Biomark, Inc. and **Mr. Beckley** explained that it is a fish and wildlife specific research company specializing in radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags to tag species and be able to track them for research. **Senator Stennett** further inquired about what Mr. Beckley will lend to the Parks and Recreation Department, what specific expertise he brings. **Mr. Beckley** indicated he has strong leadership ability, the ability to think strategically, build teams, and work with others; he will contribute by creating vision and helping to get their work completed.

Chairman Heider announced that a vote on this appointment will take place at the next Committee meeting.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT: The Gubernatorial Appointment of Cally Roach to the Idaho Parks and Recreation Board (Board).

Cally Roach introduced herself and said she was honored to be asked to serve on the Board and pleased to be in the role. She loves the outdoors, recreation, fly fishing, and skiing. She discussed her experience on various boards, passion for governance, and feeling that it is an important responsibility.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Patrick** disclosed he has known Ms. Roach for some time.

Vice Chairman Brackett asked Ms. Roach what areas of particular interest would she pursue or contribute to the Board. **Ms. Roach** stated presently she is learning as much as she can before interjecting herself. She understands that Idaho parks are wearing out due to growth, and funding is needed for maintenance.

Chairman Heider announced that a vote on this appointment will take place at the next Committee meeting.

Relating to shooting ranges; to provide additional powers and duties of the Fish and Game Commission, to identify suitable land for shooting ranges, to provide for the public shooting range fund.

Representative Nilsson Troy, District 5, brought a letter from Brian Judy of the National Rifle Association of America and asked the page to distribute to the Committee members (see attachment 1). She explained this bill aligns with the Target Practice and Marksmanship Training Support Act adopted into law in 2019. It promotes firearm safety, training, and the enjoyment of shooting sports, and provides states with greater opportunities to use Pittman–Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act (Pittman-Robertson) funds for hunter safety and range development. She advised that this bill would reduce the state's share of match for Pittman-Robertson from 30 percent to 10 percent and it expands the time to construct ranges from two to five years. She expounded that as more land is being developed for residential and commercial uses, shooting ranges are being crowded out of their locations by the developments encroaching into the traditional buffer zones of rural land. This bill provides for the maintenance of existing ranges, construction of new ranges, and assists in the relocation where necessary; by declaring that public shooting ranges are for public use and an appropriate purchase for the development of Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) land. She detailed the state matching fees, fines, and fees being charged, and what monies goes into a Public Shooting Range Fund to be administered by IDFG for shooting range development and hunter education.

DISCUSSION:

Senator Stennett asked about range locations and jurisdiction of shooting ranges. **Representative Nilsson Troy** explained that ranges can apply for funds to relocate, and to assist in challenges that arise of being too close to community areas. This bill guides the IDFG director in working with the local communities and codes to find the best range location.

TESTIMONY:

Paul Kline, Deputy Director Programs/Policy, IDFG, clarified what the role of IDFG is in developing shooting ranges. He explained this bill focuses on the development of public shooting ranges in Idaho. He pointed out the bill establishes safe shooting ranges on public land, sets aside a public shooting range fund for the funding of public ranges, and how funds received from Pittman-Robertson, \$550,000 annually, will be distributed.

DISCUSSION:

Senator Stennett and **Mr. Kline** discussed the three primary ranges IDFG currently controls, as well as the difference between those and private clubs which are not involved with IDFG. **Mr. Kline** stated that the IDFG is not getting into the shooting range business. They further discussed range jurisdiction.

Senator Patrick and **Mr. Kline** discussed how potential conflicts, especially around no-shooting zones, would need to be avoided and the need for both new and relocated shooting ranges to be carefully located.

Senator Guthrie inquired about how many private ranges are located in Idaho and if there were conflicts to compete against these private ranges. **Mr. Kline** specified that to his knowledge it has never been brought to IDFG's attention that any public range is in conflict with a private range. They also discussed the funding model for cost sharing from other partners to be able to participate, the application process with respect to costs, and the distribution of the Pittman-Robertson funds through committee decision.

TESTIMONY:

Benn Brocksome, Idaho Sportsman Alliance, stated that their member sportsmen are looking for additional opportunities to learn and practice and this bill will help with that, asking the Committee send it to the floor with do pass recommendation.

Michael Gibson, Trout Unlimited, specified that he sits as the chair of the Boise Bureau of Land Management Resource Advisory Committee and they struggle with shooting issues on Bureau of Land Management land. There are confrontations between shooters and people recreating. He was encouraged that this bill would assist with managing public land as the population in Idaho increases.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Brackett** moved to send **H 396** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Bair** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. Vice Chairman Brackett will carry the bill on the floor.

H 493 Relating to Fish and Game; to provide for archery and muzzleloader permit fees for disabled American veterans.

Senator Den Hartog, District 22, provided background on this bill and stated it will bring the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) archery and muzzleloader permit fees into alignment with current DAV hunting license discounted fees. She detailed the fiscal impact and acknowledged that IDFG would possibly experience a revenue loss of \$18,000, based upon prior year permit sales. She reported this matter was important to her constituents, and referred to testimony from one of her constituents who was unable to be present before the Committee, reading a letter from LtCol Mitchell A. Jaurena, USMC (ret) (see attachment 2).

DISCUSSION: **Senator Stennett** and **Senator Den Hartog** discussed how the revised fee was decided upon.

In response to Committee questions, **Mr. Kline** discussed how may DAVs this change would affect, answering specifics based upon 2019 sales. He stated the majority of permits are for archery with the minority being muzzleloader.

MOTION: **Senator Guthrie** moved to send **H 493** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Patrick** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**. Senator Den Hartog will carry the bill on the floor.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Heider** adjourned the meeting at 2:19 p.m.

Senator Heider
Chair

Erin Miller
Secretary