

MINUTES  
**SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Tuesday, February 23, 2021

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW53

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Den Hartog, Vice Chairman Woodward, Senators Winder, Lodge, Rice, Vick, Crabtree, and Nelson

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Wintrow

**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:** **Chair Den Hartog** called the meeting of the Senate Transportation Committee (Committee) to order at 1:30 p.m.

**PAGE INTRODUCTION:** **Chair Den Hartog** asked the new Committee page, Ella Luekenga, of Nampa, to introduce herself to the Committee. **Ms. Luekenga** said she recently graduated from Nampa High School and is looking forward to serving a mission for her church in June. After she completes her mission, she would like to attend the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. **Senator Winder** inquired about her short- and long-term goals, to which **Ms. Luekenga** replied she would like to complete a degree in Journalism, then begin attending law school.

**PRESENTATION:** **Idaho Transportation Department Annual Update.** **Brian Ness**, Director, Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), opened with comments regarding recent transformations the department underwent. He emphasized that ITD's presentation would showcase three topics, each of which was implemented to improve services and operate in a more businesslike manner. These topics include an overview of changes at the department; how it is improving safety, mobility and economic mobility; and a look ahead at the department's future needs. **Mr. Ness** emphasized the department's focus is on citizens' safety and reducing crashes that cause injuries and fatalities. The Grant Anticipation Revenue Vehicles program has had a major influence on expediting and completing major projects across the State. One of the department's challenges is keeping up with the State's rapidly expanding population. This population growth creates congestion on roadways and requires additional modernization of transportation systems. It will take a collaboration between ITD, the executive branch, and the Idaho Legislature to identify and act upon solutions.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Woodward** questioned if fatality numbers were staying the same but going down in relation to the increased congestion and total number of miles traveled in the State. **Mr. Ness** clarified there was a decrease in fatalities, but the number remains above 200 fatalities a year. He expressed any number of fatalities is too many, but he is happy the total number is down about 11 percent. He attributes this to safety messages geared toward positive behaviors, as well as the investments made to improve safety in corridors.

**Senator Lodge** asked for an update regarding the freeway between Meridian and Caldwell, as well as between Franklin Road and Karcher Road in Nampa. **Mr. Ness** confirmed improvements to those areas should be done in spring 2021 and late 2022, respectively.

**GUBERNATORIAL REAPPOINTMENT:** **Mr. Ness** introduced Julie DeLorenzo of Boise, Idaho, for her reappointment and confirmation to the Idaho Board of Transportation for a six-year term. She is the second woman Statewide to serve on a nonpartisan board and represents District 3, which covers 2,000 lane miles and is ITD's most populous district.

**GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT:** **Jeff Marker**, Administrator, Idaho Division of Aeronautics, introduced Chris Pomeroy of Hailey, Idaho, for his appointment and confirmation to ITD's Aeronautics Advisory Board for a term of five years. Mr. Marker said he anticipates Mr. Pomeroy's experience as airport manager at Friedman Memorial Airport will enable him to bring a unique and valuable perspective to the board.

**DISCUSSION:** **Chris Pomeroy** shared his experience in Idaho's aviation community and expressed excitement about working with ITD to accomplish its goals for the State of Idaho. **Senator Woodward** inquired on the relationships between the Friedman Memorial Airport and organizations that use back-country airstrips. **Mr. Pomeroy** described the Friedman Memorial Airport as a launching point for back-country airstrips; pilots often transit through the airport on their flight path across the State.

**S 1102** **Relating to Electronic Motor Vehicle Registration.** **Brody Aston**, Westerberg and Associates, opened by explaining the proposed legislation creates a digital marketplace for the business community and public to conduct their interactions with ITD electronically. Once providers have met the qualification requirements set by ITD to participate, they will be able to electronically file vehicle titling and registration transactions with ITD's Electronic Vehicle Credential (EVC) program. This legislation will modernize code to allow for electronic integration, Mr. Aston said. If passed, the proposed legislation would expedite processing times and also contribute to reduced costs, paperwork, and pressure on Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) offices while dramatically improving customer service.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Nelson** inquired if auto dealers will be required to use the EVC. **Mr. Aston** responded that there is not a requirement to use the EVC; it is up to the provider's discretion. He did note that of the states that passed similar legislation, there is about a 90-95 percent rate of adoption.

**TESTIMONY:** **Justin Baldwin**, Assessor, Gooding County, and representing himself, testified in opposition to the bill. He cited his concern regarding the likelihood that DMVs will be left with less staff as a result of the modernization. He also expressed concern that DMV offices will be left with difficult or abnormal transactions that take longer to process. Processing these more laborious transactions requires more time, and short staffing would create an undesirable situation at the taxpayers' expense.

In his closing remarks, **Mr. Aston** asserted the EVC providers are incentivized to serve as many customers as possible to improve the ITD's titling and registration processes. He also clarified county DMV offices could experience varied impacts depending on their patron volume before and after the launch of the EVC program.

**MOTION:** **Senator Crabtree** moved to send **S 1102** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Vick** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business at this time, **Chair Den Hartog** adjourned the meeting at 1:57 p.m.

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Senator Den Hartog  
Chair

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Emily Carlisle  
Secretary