

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Wednesday, February 24, 2021

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW42

MEMBERS: Chairman Kauffman, Vice Chairman Andrus, Representatives Boyle, Kerby, Giddings, Marshall, Nichols (Brooks), Hanks, Cannon, Moon, von Ehlinger, Toone, Ruchti, Mathias

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** None

GUESTS: Allen Hodges, ITA; Russ Belville, Idaho Citizens Coalition; Benjamin Kelly, Food Producers; Casey Baker, EFI; Margie Baker, EFI; Mike Miller, self; Kelly Miller, Self; Owen Millwe, self; Abi Miller, self; Tim Cornie, self; Van Wiebe, self

Chairman Kauffman called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Mathias** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 18, and February 22, 2021. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 166: **Rep. Dixon** said the purpose of this legislation is to remove a prohibition and allow reindeer for domestic purposes north of the Salmon River so people with interest can raise reindeer in northern Idaho.

Kelly Miller, representing herself, spoke **in support** of the bill, explaining she was the director of education at the Alaskan Wildlife and Conservation Center for 12 years before moving to northern Idaho. While there she had extensive experience handling reindeer in various circumstances and venues. She would like the ability to educate and share these type of reindeer experiences with the public in northern Idaho.

Mike Miller, representing himself, spoke **in support** of the legislation. He detailed the agricultural aspects of raising reindeer. He previously owned a large farm where they raised reindeer along with other animals. He listed a variety of ways reindeer can create income including leasing them to the film industry. Even a small herd can provide economic value to a community. He addressed chronic wasting disease stating reindeer pose a very low risk for contracting the disease per the USDA.

Rep. Dixon, in closing said he had checked with the former state veterinarian and the current state veterinarian, and neither had concerns going forward.

MOTION: **Rep. von Ehlinger** made a motion to send **H 166** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation. **Motion carried by voice vote.** **Rep. Dixon** will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 126: **Braden Jensen**, Idaho Farm Bureau, stated this bill is regarding the legalization of the production, processing, transportation and research of industrial hemp in the state of Idaho. He explained the time line of progression beginning with the 2018 Farm Bill, providing the framework for the legal production of industrial hemp in the country. There are 49 states, 2 territories and 48 tribes that have legalized industrial hemp in some form or fashion. He said they had three goals to achieve which were to legalize production in the state, maintain a strong enforceable drug policy and work to ensure all stakeholders are comfortable with the proposal they developed.

Matthew Mead, Hempitecture, spoke **in support** of the legislation stating his business specializes in sustainable building products derived from agricultural hemp. He said currently he imports hemp manufactured product from Canada, sending dollars out of the state. The passage of this legislation represents an economic opportunity for hard working Idaho farmers to participate in this growing industry.

Russ Belville, Idaho Citizens Coalition, spoke **in support** stating with the passing of this legislation, Idaho will no longer be the only political jurisdiction in North America to criminalise the cultivation of hemp. He said this is a step forward in the right direction but far from a solution as it only allows for the production, processing and transport of hemp if properly licensed. He said part of the reason the ISP resists the legislation is because they will have to use a more expensive test to check for legal amounts of THC.

Benjamin Kelly, Food Producers of Idaho, spoke **in support** of **H 126**. He said the bill presented today is a responsible step forward providing Idaho farmers a viable opportunity to produce an additional crop and better diversify their operations. He explained this provides a path forward for farmers to grow hemp, produce seed and for the production of by-products from the crop.

Casey and Margie Baker, spoke **in support** of the bill stating even though there are some problems with the regulations surrounding this bill, they are hopeful it is a step forward in legalizing alternative medications for those who have to rely on legal drugs today that have damaging side effects.

Tim Cornie, farmer, spoke **in support** saying hemp grain is a very healthy product, with more protein than soy beans. It contains all 9 essential amino acids as well as being a good source of fiber. He showed several examples of hemp products that can be purchased in Idaho, yet Idaho farmers are not allowed to grow hemp. He said he has no problem with the extra paper work involved with being licensed and growing under the conditions set forth by the ISDA.

Van Wiebe, spoke **in support** of the bill listing several health benefits derived from hemp.

Steve Madden, representing himself, spoke **in opposition** to the bill, stating he came from a state that began with the legalization of hemp, slowly over the years it progressed to fully legalization of marijuana. He spoke to the effects it has had on the deterioration of that state and expressed concern Idaho could follow a similar path.

MOTION: **Rep. Andrus** made a motion to send **H 126** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Discussion on the motion was held. Committee members anxious for farmers to have the ability to grow and harvest industrial hemp expressed concern that hemp had not been removed from the schedule 1 national drug list. The committee also asked for clarification on the stance of the Idaho State Police concerning the bill.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Rep. Marshall** made a substitute motion to **HOLD H 126** for time certain, March 2, 2021. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

Representative Kauffman
Chair

Joan Majors
Secretary