

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 16, 2021

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW42

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

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Reps. Kerby, Giddings, von Ehlinger

GUESTS: None

Chairman Kauffman called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Mathias** made a motion to approve the minutes of March 10, 2021. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Roger Batt, Administrator of Idaho Mint Commission, said they were established in 1969, to fund the commission and the research arm of the Idaho Mint Industry. Assessment is 6.5 cents per pound of oil sold and has remained at that amount for the past 10 years. He explained 3.5 cents of the assessment is kept in the Idaho Mint Commission fund and the other 3.0 cents is paid to the Mint Industry Research Council. Idaho currently ranks number one in peppermint production, producing 40% of the nation's peppermint oil. There are 73 Idaho mint growers, growing about 18,000 acres of mint which produces about 1.8 million pounds of mint oil from that acreage. Some of the challenges faced this year stem from the decline in products that normally use mint oil such as chewing gum, candy and oral health products. He said while some sectors show a decline in demand, the aromatherapy sector demand remains strong.

In response to a committee question, **Mr. Batt** said mineral oils can be stored safely for several years but will lose some of it's value over time.

In response to a committee question concerning where the product is shipped, **Mr. Batt** said most of it goes to the European Union.

Lloyd Knight, Administrator, Division of Plant Industries, explained the four invasive species program areas, which are prevention, early detection, management and control, and education and outreach. He reviewed the program budget pointing out the three main sources of funding from the General Fund, the Dedicated Fund and federal cost share matching funds. He said Zero Based Rulemaking will include the Rules Governing Invasive Species and Noxious Weeds in 2021.

Nic Zurfluh, Section Manager, Invasive Species, explained the recent contaminated zebra mussels found in moss balls used in aquariums and spoke to their response locally as well as the regional and national response in acting quickly to contain it. He said this is the 12th year of the watercraft inspection program. Last year they performed a record number of inspections. They have extended the season as well as extending the hours of operation at the water craft inspection stations. He said they have support of local law enforcement and the Idaho State Police for each station. The relationships with the surrounding states has increased over the years with coordinated cooperation. He explained the Idaho rapid response plan that aligns with the regional state and the Columbia River Basin Interagency Plan.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting was adjourned at 2:34 p.m.

Representative Kauffman
Chair

Joan Majors
Secretary