

MINUTES

HOUSE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, February 14, 2022

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman Ehardt, Vice Chairman Wisniewski, Representatives Vander Woude, Horman, Scott, Amador, Armstrong (Armstrong), Furniss, Hartgen, Lickley, Young, Adams, Yamamoto, Chew, Necochea, Nash

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Rep. Nash

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of the session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

MOTION: **Chairman Ehardt** called the meeting to order at 1:31 p.m.

Rep. Adams made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2022, meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Jess Byrne, Director of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), stood before the committee to answer questions about ARPA funds. He reviewed with the committee the different types of systems that have requested ARPA funds. Director Byrne also reviewed the systems that have expressed interest in funds for planning grants.

In answer to committee questions, **Director Byrne** stated the goal of the DEQ was to fund all planning project grant requests. He recommended against reserving money for the next fiscal year because of ARPA deadlines. He reminded the committee that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act would provide additional money in the future. At least 49% of those funds are intended to be issued as grants. The DEQ expects to have a significant amount of money to help systems in the future.

Director Byrne discussed points that could be included in the committees memo to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee.

Responding to committee questions, **Director Byrne** felt the only contingency for projects that don't meet ARPA deadlines is for the DEQ to do everything expected to choose projects that could meet ARPA deadlines. They plan on reserving funds for possible cost increases during the process. He noted that Infrastructure funds might also be needed to help finish some system's projects. The DEQ was also hoping they could give grant money to projects that met intended criteria, where costs were incurred after March, 2 2021. This would include funding projects that are currently under construction. Director Byrne explained this date was part of the rules for ARPA funding and allowed for funding of existing projects. He also made clear that he wanted to keep the committee informed, but hoped that reporting could coincide with other reporting deadlines of the DEQ's to lessen the burden.

Alex Adams, Administrator of the Idaho Division of Financial Management, emphasized the U.S. Treasury has confirmed the ARPA deadline will not be pushed forward. He confirmed that **Director Byrne** was correct in trying to allocate money to projects that can be finished by the deadline.

Some committee members worried that the committee was being too binding on the DEQ in the committees memo to JFAC. Others clarified that their intent was not to bind but to keep the committee informed. The committee made clear that DEQ's written report is to be informative, and not for the committee to make changes. Committee members worked on the wording for the memo being presented to JFAC.

MOTION:

Rep. Amador made a motion for the Environment, Energy and Technology Committee (EET) to adopt the language as discussed and direct the chairman of EET to draft a memo in this language to JFAC.

VOTE ON MOTION:

Motion carried by voice vote. Rep. Wisniewski asked to reserve a right to change his vote on specific items that require a lot of ARPA funding.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

Representative Ehardt
Chair

Maggie Price
Secretary