

MINUTES

HOUSE ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY & TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

DATE: Monday, January 30, 2023
TIME: 2:00 P.M.
PLACE: Room EW41
MEMBERS: Chairman Barbieri, Vice Chairman Furniss, Representatives Vander Woude, Horman, Scott, Young, Wisniewski, Raybould, Allgood, Bundy, Lambert, Mickelsen (Coletti), Redman, Wheeler, Chew, Necochea, Rubel
ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Representative Raybould, Rubel
GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

Chairman Barbieri called the meeting to order at 2:01 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Redman** made a motion to approve the minutes from January 26, 2023.
Motion carried by voice vote.

Richard Stover, Administrator of the Office of Energy and Mineral Resources [OEMR], presented to the committee an overview of the energy and mineral landscape in Idaho. He noted the responsibilities of OEMR as the clearinghouse for energy and mineral information. He noted OEMR's responsibility to administer loan & financial assistance programs, and it's role as the administrative arm of the Idaho Strategic Energy Alliance. He said the focus of OEMR is protecting reliable, affordable and sustainable power in Idaho, and is the state-cooperative agency for NEPA projects, coordinating comments and input among state agencies. He said that Idaho produces less energy (electricity, natural gas and fuel) than it consumes, and the disparity is caused by the transportation of fuels. He noted that Idaho imports all petroleum products. He stated Idaho is a net-exporter of electricity, consuming 70% of the electricity produced in the state, and the power sources in Idaho are hydro-power, wind and solar power which comprise 78% of the energy produced in the state. He noted the average utility rate in Idaho in 2021 was the lowest in the nation and mentioned OEMR's dedication to maintain low energy prices for Idaho consumers and businesses. He said Idaho's energy expenditure totalled 7% of the state's Gross Domestic Product, and approximately 2,400 energy businesses operated in Idaho with 50,800 energy jobs in the state. He advised the low cost of energy in Idaho has attracted businesses to the state.

Mr. Stover advised Committee members of the programs currently being ran by OEMR, and the State Energy Loan Program had granted 15 loans. Mr. Stover mentioned the positive impact of the Government Leading by Example Program which audited local governments to find energy efficiencies. He noted the Energy Resiliency Grant Program had funded a number of investor and consumer owned utilities projects and had an immediate impact on the grid.

In response to questions from Committee Members, **Mr. Stover** noted roof-top solar had been a significant beneficiary of the State Energy Loan Program. He said wind and solar power were intermittent and this factor is considered into the utility companies Integrated Resource Plans. In answering a question regarding Cobalt, Mr. Stover stated Idaho expected to mine enough cobalt for 400,000 batteries. He advised the Energy Resiliency Grant would be strategically tied to federal funding and federal funding is designed to secure and fortify grid resiliency.

Sen. Chuck Winder, President of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region [PNWER], presented to the Committee the regional importance of energy production and technology across ten regional jurisdictions. Sen. Winder advised the initiative for his presidency is food security and supply chain resilience, and noted during the pandemic there was not a substantive plan for the provision of basic needs. He stated the importance of developing a cooperative strategy between the regions included in PNWER. Sen. Winder noted the importance of reforming the permitting process to quickly utilize the oil supply, and without reform the United States could become dependent on foreign states for energy supplies. Sen. Winder noted the availability of minerals in the Northwest United States and in Canada.

In response to questions from Committee members, **Sen. Winder** noted that Canadian policy had limited the production of energy and resources and the presence of the Canadian and American and PNWER summits. He explained PNWER's role in appealing for cooperation between local, state and federal governing authorities and the permitting process was regulated by the federal government.

Sen. Winder advised the importance of developing common goals across PNWER based on realistic expectations regarding climate change and electrification and the importance of recognizing the need for fossil fuels in future planning. He stated no transition plan is currently in place and such a plan would unfold over decades. Sen. Winder advised the Committee of the impact of neighboring states' environmental policies on Idaho, noting the importance of PNWER opposing the policies.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the Committee, meeting adjourned at 2:56 p.m.

Representative Barbieri
Chair

Jeremy Collier
Secretary