

MINUTES
SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, February 07, 2023

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Hartgen, Vice Chairman Nichols, Senators Foreman, Hart, Schroeder, Carlson, Zuiderveld, Semmelroth, and Taylor

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

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: **Chairman Hartgen** called the meeting of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee (Committee) to order at 8:02 a.m.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Carlson** moved to approve the Minutes of January 17, 2023. **Senator Taylor** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Schroeder** moved to approve the Minutes of January 19, 2023. **Senator Zuiderveld** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Foreman** moved to approve the Minutes of January 26, 2023. **Senator Zuiderveld** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Schroeder** moved to approve the Minutes of January 31, 2023. **Senator Taylor** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Semmelroth** moved to approve the Minutes of January 24, 2023. **Senator Taylor** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: **Budget Brief to Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee. Keith Bybee**, Manager, Budget and Policy Analysis, Idaho Legislative Services Office (LSO) introduced his staff, Alex Williamson and Nate Osborne. He stated his office was nonpartisan and responsible for the production of the Legislative Budget Book. He mentioned the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) had 28 different fund sources divided into three categories, general funds, dedicated funds and regulatory funds.

Alex Williamson, Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), Budget and Policy Analyst gave an in depth overview of the operating budget and where the ISDA had been for fiscal year 2022. (Attachment 1)

Nate Osborne, Agricultural Research and Extension Services, Budget and Policy Analyst gave an in depth agency overview, he cited Idaho Code Title 33 Education, Chapter 29 - University of Idaho - Federal Education Aid - § 33-2905 addresses Agricultural Experimentations. The assent of the Legislature of the state of Idaho was hereby given to all provisions and requirements of an act of Congress approved February 24, 1925, commonly known as "The Purnell Act" and entitled "An act to authorize more complete endowment of agricultural experimentation and for other purposes," and the acts amendatory thereof and supplementary thereto. **Mr. Osborne** pointed out agriculture, research and extension services were housed at the University of Idaho, College of Agriculture and Life Science, this was where the Idaho Agriculture Experiment Station was created. (Attachment 2)

Senator Semmelroth questioned what agency was not personnel driven. **Mr.**

Osborne replied an agency that dealt with trusts would not be personnel driven.

PRESENTATION: Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission Annual Report. Delwyne Trefz, Administrator, (ISWCC) presented his 2022 annual performance report to the Committee. He introduced Devin Fielding, President of the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD). **Mr. Trefz** spoke on its mission to assist private landowners in conservation and enhancement of Idaho's natural resources. He stated the ISWCC was governed by a board of seven Commissioners who were appointed by the Governor.

Mr. Trefz presented the 2022 annual budget. He discussed ISWCC's accomplishments in recent years, namely its financial and technical assistance to conservation districts. Moreover, he talked about federal grants and the ability to fill vacancies with conservation planners.

Mr. Trefz reviewed the Water Quality Program for Agriculture (WQPA) implementation status. The Governor revised FY 2024 budget recommendation included \$5 million to fund WQPA for FY 2023 - FY 2024. He stated the appropriation would be used to fund the highest-ranked projects on file. **Mr. Trefz** indicated there were 32 projects in implementation of 93 proposed. The WQPA program provided cost-share assistance for conservation projects on private lands. The projects were administered by conservation districts who worked with landowners to implement conservation plans. (Attachments 3 and 4)

PRESENTATION: Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts (IASCD). Devin Fielding, President, IASCD commenced his presentation with three questions. 1.) Who were soil and water conservation districts - elected officials who strived for voluntary locally led, non-regulatory conservation in Idaho. We seek partnerships between landowners, state, and federal agencies. 2.) What we do - we serve as intermediaries and advocates for conservation on private ground in Idaho. 3.) Why we do it - food production, forestry and mining accounted for about \$4.5 billion in Idaho's economy. **Mr. Fielding** specified conservation ensured these vital natural resources will be available for generations to come.

Mr. Fielding concluded the IASCD strived to implement voluntary, locally led, non-regulatory conservation in Idaho, by partnering with individuals, industry and government. He believed stewardship of natural resources would ensure the success of Idaho for generations to come. (Attachment 5)

Senator Hart inquired if soil conservation was unique to Idaho, if other states were trying a non-regulatory approach and, what were the 50 district boundaries. **Mr. Fielding** responded it was a nationwide approach and, the districts were determined by the local landowners.

PRESENTATION: Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association. Doug Evans, Board President, Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association addressed the Committee on behalf of Samantha Parrott, Executive Director, and himself. He stated the Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association was a grower led organization representing sugarbeet growers across the Amalgamated Sugar Co-Op growing area. Its mission and purpose was to support state and federal Legislation that advanced the agricultural industry. Idaho ranked second nationally in the production of sugarbeets and, processed seven million tons of sugarbeets in three Idaho factories; Twin Falls, Paul and, Nampa Idaho. He cited that Nyssa-Nampa Sugarbeet Growers Association, and the Idaho Sugarbeet Growers Association consolidated to become Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association. They represented all the sugarbeets grown for Amalgamated Sugar Company. (Attachment 6)

PRESENTATION: Amalgamated Sugar. **Jessica Anderson**, Public Affairs Manager, Amalgamated Sugar, gave a brief overview of Amalgamated Sugar history. Amalgamated began as Ogden Sugar Company, founded in 1897. In the early 1900's several sugarbeet companies combined to purchase Amalgamated Sugar. By 1916 the Twin Falls Idaho factory was constructed and in 1917 the factory in Paul Idaho was opened. She stated it was the largest processing facility in North America. By 1942 the factory in Nampa, Idaho was constructed, it was the second largest sugarbeet company in the United States and produced ten percent of the nations sugar. **Ms. Anderson** stated its mission, core values and vision was to produce real sugar in the most technologically advanced and socially responsible manner. (Attachment 7)

Senator Taylor inquired how many sugarbeets are grown per acre. **Ms. Anderson** consulted with **Doug Evans**, President, Snake River Sugarbeet Growers Association who responded they planted 50,000 to 60,000 seeds per acre. The goal was 40 tons of sugarbeets per acre.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Hartgen** adjourned the meeting at 9:42 a.m.

Senator Hartgen
Chair

Melissa Price
Secretary