

MINUTES
SENATE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 07, 2023

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Hartgen, Senators Foreman, Hart, Schroeder, Dunn (Carlson), Zuiderveld, Semmelroth, and Taylor

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: Vice Chair Nichols

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 Schroeder** moved to approve the Minutes of February 21 2023. **Senator Semmelroth** seconded the motion. The motion passed by **voice vote**.

GUBERNATORIAL APPOINTMENT: **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Appointment of Joan Cloonan to the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission**, for a term commencing August 15, 2022 and expiring July 1, 2026. **Ms. Cloonan** gave a brief overview of her background as an Attorney for the Department of Justice in Washington D.C. She mentioned when she moved to Idaho with her husband she worked for Simplot in their legal department, her focus was on environmental compliance. She had been on many environmental committees and boards, and believed in conservation, and the wise use of Idaho's natural resources.

Ms. Cloonan spoke on the non-regulatory aspect, she believed this was the only way to protect Idaho's natural resources. Regulation did not work, the non-regulatory aspect applied to commissions, district members and customers. She mentioned the mission of the Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (ISWCC) was conservation the Idaho way, the belief that the very best way to care for and enhance the soil, water, air, plants and wildlife is through voluntary, locally led stewardship.

In conclusion, **Ms. Cloonan** cited her passion for the ISWCC, and being on the commission. She ended with a quote from Sanskrit, "Upon this handful of soil our survival depends. Husband it and it will grow our food, our fuel, and our shelter and surround us with beauty. Abuse it and the soil will collapse and die, taking humanity with it." -Sanskrit proverb, circa 1500 B.C.

Senator Semmelroth asked Ms. Cloonan to explain the difference between a regulatory and non-regulatory approach, and her change in perspective. **Ms. Cloonan** explained agriculture was difficult to regulate in a farming aspect. A regulatory decision related to a regulatory responsibility which the council had been given by legislation and could be enforced against individuals. A non-regulatory decision was simply one that did not relate to a regulatory responsibility. Most regulations were from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). She replied that agriculture in Idaho needed to be regulated differently, she had lived in Florida and upstate New York, and Washington bureaucrats did not know how to farm in Idaho, regulations were not a fit all solution.

Senator Hart inquired about the Supreme Court decision between the EPA and Chevron, and would it create challenges for Idaho to manage its soil. **Ms. Cloonan** replied she did not have enough details about the decision to answer.

GUBERNATORIAL REAPPOINTMENT: **Committee Consideration of the Gubernatorial Reappointment of Wendy Pratt to the State Soil and Water Conservation Commission**, for a term commencing July 1, 2022 and expiring July 1, 2025. **Ms. Pratt** via zoom, stated she enjoyed her time with the ISWCC and would like to be reappointed to the Commission. She mentioned her and her husband were ranchers, and irrigated from the Snake and Blackfoot Rivers. She had been involved with conservation for many years. **Ms. Pratt** mentioned she had been secretary and treasurer for two canal companies and a grazing association for over 30 years. She understood the effectiveness of a good board of commissioners.

Ms. Pratt believed soil and water conservation was the foundation to other issues Idaho faced. It was vital to the future to have healthy soils that did not erode through wind and water. It was critical to have excellent farming practices, and up-to-date irrigation technologies. She stated education for Idaho's youth and for the newcomers moving into the state, they needed to understand the importance of Idaho's natural resources.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Hartgen** adjourned the meeting at 8:33 a.m.

Senator Hartgen
Chair

Melissa Price
Secretary