

MINUTES  
**SENATE RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Wednesday, March 05, 2025

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Burtenshaw, Vice Chairman Hart, Senators Guthrie, Harris, Okuniewicz, Cook, VanOrden, and Kohl

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senator Taylor

**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 Burtenshaw** called the meeting of the Senate Resources and Environment Committee (Committee) to order at 1:30 p.m.

**PASSED THE GAVEL:** Chairman Burtenshaw passed the gavel to Vice Chairman Hart.

**H 82** **LIVESTOCK DEPREDATION CLAIMS - Amends existing law to provide for the payment of depredation claims that are deemed possible.** **Chairman Burtenshaw** explained this legislation revised language in Idaho Code § 36 -1121 to be consistent with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service language. So, "validated" claims for depredation were revised to "confirmed" claims for depredation. This legislation also allowed that if all confirmed depredation claims were paid and there were remaining funds in the State Depredation of Livestock and Prevention Fund, probable claims for depredation could be paid at 75 percent of the current fair market value.

**DISCUSSION:** **Vice Chairman Hart** asked for the source of the funds for these payments. **Chairman Burtenshaw** responded this legislation concerned the State Depredation of Livestock and Prevention Fund established by legislation last year. This was a State fund managed by the Office of Species Conservation that allocated \$150,000 available annually for wildlife depredation and \$75,000 for conflict prevention.

**TESTIMONY:** **Ellary TuckerWilliams**, Legislative and Community Engagement Coordinator for the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), and **Nick Fasciano**, Executive Director of the Idaho Wildlife Federation, testified in favor of **H 82**. Both shared that as Idaho worked to manage wolves and grizzly bears effectively, it was important to address the financial stresses faced by livestock owners and producers and ensured they were not unduly impacted by depredation by these predators.

Written testimony in favor of **H 82** was submitted to the Committee by Living with Wolves, Sun Valley, Idaho (Attachment 1) .

**MOTION:** **Senator Okuniewicz** moved to send **H 82** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Guthrie** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**HJM 4**

**GRIZZLY BEAR - States findings of the Legislature and calls upon the federal government to delist grizzly bears and review the Endangered Species Act.** Chairman Burtenshaw explained this memorial called for an end to listing grizzly bears as an endangered species in the lower 48 states and returned management to the states. He referred the Committee to a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed grizzly bear Distinct Population Segment boundary map (Attachment 2). He believed the significant expansion of the grizzly bear population since their listing as an endangered species in 1975 demonstrated the ability of state agencies to conserve and manage this population, and he did not believe the recent proposed expansion of federally managed territory by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was justified.

**MOTION:**

**Senator Guthrie** moved to send **HJM 4** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Kohl** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**PASSED THE GAVEL:**

Vice Chairman Hart passed the gavel to Chairman Burtenshaw.

**AGENCY UPDATE**

**Idaho Department of Fish and Game Agency Update.** **Jim Fredericks**, Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, provided an update on the status of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and on the wolf and grizzly bear populations in Idaho. He referred the Committee to his Power Point presentation (Attachment 3).

**Chronic Wasting Disease Update.** **Mr. Fredericks** reviewed the causes and development of CWD, the distribution of CWD cases in North America, and what happens when CWD prevalence was high. He reviewed CWD management by IDFG, including actions taken to contain the disease. He reviewed some statistics on DWD prevalence from 2021 to 2024 and maps showing case distribution.

**Wolf and Grizzly Management Update.** **Mr. Fredericks** reviewed the population monitoring history of wolves from 1995 to current, and wolf population estimates from 2019 to 2023. He reviewed the number and distribution around the State of wolf-caused livestock depredations. He reviewed some recent legal challenges to wolf management in Idaho, including the federal injunction on wolf trapping. He spoke about the unprecedented number of depredations on cattle and the additional funding to support livestock producers dealing with depredations. He reviewed numbers on the grizzly bear conflicts in Eastern Idaho and the Idaho Panhandle, and IDFG's efforts to educate and prevent conflicts between humans and grizzly bears. He reviewed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service proposed grizzly bear Distinct Population Segment boundary already presented by Chairman Burtenshaw, and IDFG's actions to oppose this proposed rule.

**ADJOURNED:**

There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Burtenshaw** adjourned the meeting at 2:24 p.m.

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Senator Burtenshaw  
Chair

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Shelly Johnson  
Secretary