

MINUTES  
**SENATE RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, February 02, 2026

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

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Burtenshaw, Vice Chairman Hart, Senators Guthrie, Harris, Okuniewicz, Cook, VanOrden, Kohl, 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 Burtenshaw** called the meeting of the Senate Resources and Environment Committee (Committee) to order at 1:30 p.m.

**PRESENTATION:** **Surface Water Coalition (SWC)/Idaho Ground Water Appropriators (IGWA) Surface Water Districts Report.** **Paul Arrington**, Executive Director, Idaho Water Users Association, introduced a presentation from surface and ground water groups utilizing public and private funds to invest in water infrastructure and water supply projects across Idaho.

**Lorri Gray**, Secretary/Treasurer, Nampa & Meridian Irrigation District, reviewed the scope, goals, costs, funding, and progress of the Nampa and Meridian Irrigation District's Ridenbaugh Headworks Modernization Project (Attachments 1 and 2).

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Harris** asked if part of their project cost included the easements and building the road. **Ms. Gray** responded that the \$21 million was the full cost of the project, including the gates, structures, and easements, and working with Alta Harris Park.

**Senator Cook** asked for some milestones and dates for the project. **Ms. Gray** responded that they would install the portable dam in October. They would pull that out by April 15, so they could run the 2026 irrigation season. Once the 2026 irrigation season completed in October, they would install the portable dam on the northeast side of the river, put in an ogee weir, and finish that side. In March 2027, they would pull out the portable dam and operate during the 2027 irrigation season using the new infrastructure, but without taking out the old, to make sure everything ran well. If everything ran well, at the end of the 2027 irrigation season they would pull out the piers.

**Chairman Burtenshaw** asked for a description of a crest plate or gate. **Ms. Gray** explained that it was a concrete structure that looked like a teardrop. It was automated. There was a big screw that came down and as the screw was turned, it set the gate up and then laid it back down. The top of the teardrop would lay on the edge of the riverbed.

**PRESENTATION:** **Daniel Hoke**, Watermaster, Water District 63, reviewed Water District 63's Treasure Valley Water District Project, which was a project designed to improve water management by leveraging improved data collection throughout the Boise River Basin (Attachment 3). He reviewed water supply trends in the Treasure Valley, and the three phases of the project. Phase one included equipment installation and data collection, phase two included monitoring and data analysis, and phase three included mitigation and collaboration. Phase one was completed. He shared some draft models and spoke about model development and funding.

**DISCUSSION:** **Chairman Burtenshaw** asked how Eastern Oregon affected Water District 63. **Mr. Hoke** responded that District 63 included the Boise River Basin, including everything above the reservoirs that returned back to the Boise River, and Eastern Oregon was not a factor.

**PRESENTATION:** **Jay Barlogi**, General Manager, Twin Falls Canal Company, reviewed the efforts of the Twin Falls Canal Company to improve canal efficiency and enhance water supply sustainability in the Magic Valley (Attachment 4). Their project was funded by the Idaho Department of Water Resources Regional Water Sustainability Program Grant, which utilized federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds and state surplus funds. He reviewed the process of relining old inefficient canals, materials used, and shared their progress on the project.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Harris** asked for the cost per mile for the new liner. **Mr. Barlogi** responded that the project cost was about \$26.3 million with about \$2 million per mile just for the liner. **Senator Harris** asked if there were problems with creatures bothering the liner, such as badgers. **Mr. Barlogi** responded that they had no experience with animals interfering with the liner.

**Senator Cook** asked for an explanation of what Mr. Barlogi described as seepage on one of the slides. **Mr. Barlogi** returned to a slide showing seepage and pointed out areas that showed where water was seeping out of the canal and creating land that was not arable. **Senator Cook** asked if this was not just a high water table, but was actually standing water on the soil. **Mr. Barlogi** responded that it was both. **Senator Cook** asked how the new liners might affect the aquifer or if the aquifer was not a concern in Twin Falls. **Mr. Barlogi** responded that this land was not within the Eastern Snake River Plain Aquifer. He added that they were building a recharge reservoir to replace surface water that had been created by seepage from the canal parallel to Rock Creek Canyon to address any issues with the local water table.

**Senator Hart** asked if there had been any groundwater users that had been adversely affected by the liner installation and if they negotiated with any groundwater users to solve water use problems. **Mr. Barlogi** responded that they had no problems with groundwater users in the areas where liners were completed in 2019, 2021, and 2023.

**PRESENTATION:** **Alan Jackson**, District Manager, Bingham County Groundwater District explained his district included irrigated acres and irrigation wells that were owned by individual farms and water users. He reviewed some of the District's efforts to develop alternatives to make their water supply more reliable, their groundwater to surface water conversion projects, their collaboration with the Idaho Water Resources Research Institute, and their project funding, which consisted of grants from the Idaho Water Resource Board and funds from individual users.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Guthrie** asked if activities that prevented groundwater recharge might be counterproductive. **Mr. Jackson** responded that water management was all about timing, and that there were times when they had extra water that they wanted to be able to put in the ground for storage, but at other times they needed to deliver water. He thought that they needed to be able to build the tools they needed to be intentional in their management. **Senator Guthrie** asked if they pushed 100 CFS out through an unlined canal and lost 25 percent through seepage, and then lined it and still pushed 100 CFS, was that a decrease in a water right to the person who used to receive the 25 percent through seepage. **Mr. Jackson** responded that it was a better management tool to be able to deliver that water in the first place, rather than leaving users to recover it with whatever other means came along.

**PRESENTATION:** **Aaron Dalling**, Manager, Fremont - Madison Irrigation District and Secretary, Henry's Fork and Madison Groundwater Districts, reviewed the progress of water projects in his districts (Attachment 5). He shared about the installation of telemetry on groundwater flow meters to help monitor groundwater diversions and replacing a three-mile groundwater conveyance in the Madison and Henry's Fork Groundwater Districts, about the completion of the North Fremont Canals Pipeline, which consisted of 70 miles of pipeline that serviced about 24,000 acres with pressurized irrigation water, and about the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District Automation Project to automate headgates and check structures. He reviewed the Southeast Idaho Canal Company Aging Infrastructure Project to replace one diversion dam, 12 check structures, and 45 headgates. He spoke about funding for these projects and their attempts to utilize local contractors and products.

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

**DOCKET NO. 37-0204-2501** **Shoshone Bannock Tribal Water Supply Bank Rules (ZBR Chapter Rewrite)- Pending Rule**, p. 181. **Mary Condon**, Project Manager 1, Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) referred the Committee to the 2026 Senate Resources and Environment Committee Pending Rules Review Book starting on page 181. She explained this rule enhanced the authority and structure of the bank provided within the 1990 Ford Hull Water Rights Settlement Agreement for the leases and rentals of tribal stored water outside the reservation. She reviewed the rulemaking process for this Docket, which included meetings with the Idaho Water Resource Board and collaboration with legal counsel for the Shoshone Bannock Tribes. She referred the Committee to her handouts associated with **Docket No. 37-0204-2501**, labeled 370204-01 and 37020-02 (Attachment 6). The first handout listed the major changes to the rule and provided a brief high-level summary of any substantive changes. The second handout contained all the substantive changes within the rule. **Ms. Condon** reviewed the substantive changes in detail.

**DISCUSSION:** **Chairman Burtenshaw** asked if there was a difference between reservation and tribal as in tribal storage water and reservation water master, or if they were interchangeable. **Ms. Condon** responded they were not used interchangeably, one spoke about stored water and one referred to the water master. **Vice Chairman Hart** asked if the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes were represented in this rulemaking process. **Ms. Condon** responded that they were heavily involved in this rulemaking process.

**TESTIMONY:** **Hailie Johnson-Waskow**, on behalf of the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, testified that IDWR consulted with the tribes on this rule and the tribes were in favor of the rule changes.

**MOTION:** **Senator Okuniewicz** moved to approve **Docket No. 37-0204-2501**. **Senator VanOrden** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**DOCKET NO. 37-0307-2501** **Stream Channel Alteration Rules (ZBR Chapter Rewrite)- Pending Rule**, p. 188. **Aaron Golart**, Stream Channel Coordinator, IDWR, referred the Committee to the 2026 Senate Resources and Environment Committee Pending Rules Review Book starting on page 188. He explained this rule defined the application review and decision process for proposed stream in stream projects and establish minimum standards for common stream alteration activities. Additionally, the rules identified permit exemptions, set criteria for emergency permitting, and provided enforcement guidance for unauthorized stream channel alterations. He reviewed the rulemaking process for this Docket. He referred the Committee to his handouts associated with **Docket No. 37-0307-2501**, labeled 370307-01 and 370307-02 (Attachment 7). The first handout listed the major changes to the rule and provided a brief, high-level summary of any substantive changes. The second handout contained all the substantive changes within the rule. **Mr. Golart** reviewed the substantive changes in detail.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Okuniewicz** asked about the fee noted in the fee summary on page 188. **Mr. Golart** responded that there was a fee associated with stream alteration permits that was \$20 and was unchanged.

**Vice Chairman Hart** stated he had a conflict of interest pursuant to Senate Rule 39(H) but intended to vote.

**MOTION:** **Senator Okuniewicz** moved to approve **Docket No. 37-0307-2501**. **Senator Taylor** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

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

**DOCKET NO. 37-0312-2501** **Chairman Burtenshaw** stated the meeting had run out of time, so Docket No. 37-0312-2501 would be considered in a future meeting.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Burtenshaw** adjourned the meeting at 2:59 p.m.

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Senator Burtenshaw  
Chair

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Shelly Johnson  
Secretary