

MINUTES
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 12, 2026

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW42

MEMBERS: Chairman Raymond, Vice Chairman Shirts, Representatives Cannon, McCann, Garner, Nelsen, Pickett, Sauter, Miller, Beiswenger, Dygert, Leavitt, Mendive, Hall (Stone), Healey, Mathias, Haws

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Reps. Haws, Cannon

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 Shirts called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

MOTION: **Rep. Sauter** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 10, 2026. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 33192: **Rep. Vander Woude** presented **RS 33192** explaining all milk and cream purchased or sold in Idaho, based on milkfat, protein, lactose, solids nonfat, somatic cell count, or any other quality parameter, shall be tested using methods approved by the Director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. Samples shall be taken from each shipment by a department-authorized milk hauler and maintained in a tamper-evident location between thirty-three (33) and forty-five (45) degrees Fahrenheit. Samples may be tested by the buyer, seller, or the Department at any time. The Department is authorized to audit payments to ensure compliance with established requirements.

MOTION: **Rep. Leavitt** made a motion to introduce **RS 33192**. **Rep. Nelsen** invoked Rule 80 Stating a conflict of interest. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

Mat Weaver, Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR), Director, Idaho Soil and Water Conservation Commission (SWCC), Acting Administrator, explained the situational assessment and stakeholder survey identified key themes related to agency perceptions (regulatory vs. voluntary roles), appropriate agencies for potential merger, organizational structure, statutory considerations, and the roles of SWCC commissioners and staff. Additional themes included information and outreach needs, preservation of SWCC's non-regulatory identity, and areas to avoid in a merger. Stakeholders also highlighted potential gains such as improved data and knowledge sharing, administrative efficiencies, and enhanced recruitment and retention, while emphasizing the importance of protecting funding, CREP administration, office resources, political positioning, and effective public communication.

Bryant Kuechle, The Langdon Group, Executive Director, said the SWCC evaluated potential efficiencies, including a merger with the IDWR. Following stakeholder interviews, public outreach, and a formal situational assessment conducted by the Langdon Group (Aug.–Nov. 2025), the final report concluded if SWCC merges with another agency, IDWR is the appropriate partner due to programmatic alignment, technical capacity, and administrative efficiencies. Recommendations preserve SWCC's non-regulatory authority, commission structure, branding, budget protections, and legislative reporting, while consolidating support services where appropriate.

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:08 p.m.

Representative Shirts
Chair

Jayne Feik
Secretary