

MINUTES
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 12, 2026

TIME: 1:30 P.M.

PLACE: Room WW53

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Okuniewicz, Senators Burtenshaw, Hart, Adams, Galloway, Kohl, Rabe, Semmelroth and Acting Senator Bjerke (Keyser)

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:**

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 Okuniewicz** called the meeting of the Senate Transportation Committee (Committee) to order at 1:30 p.m.

H 533 **TRANSPORTATION - Amends and adds to existing law to provide for the elimination of vehicle registration stickers. Representative John Weber** presented **H 533**, which would eliminate the requirement to display registration stickers on license plates. He explained that stickers were no longer useful for law enforcement due to overlapping color schemes and widespread reliance on electronic plate checks. He noted the change would save approximately \$300,000 for the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD), and that law enforcement organizations remained neutral.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Adams** asked whether other states had eliminated their registration sticker programs. **Rep. Weber** responded that several states had done so, though he did not have a specific list available, and indicated the number was growing. **Senator Adams** inquired about the original purpose of registration stickers. **Rep. Weber** responded that the original purpose had been to provide a visual cue for law enforcement. There were several different colors, and officers could look at the color to determine whether a registration had expired. However, that was no longer the case. The multiple color system had gone away, and only three colors—red, white, and blue—had been in rotation at any given time.

Senator Galloway asked why the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) and the Sheriff's Association remained neutral and whether they had expressed any concerns about not supporting the measure. She also asked if he could explain why they had chosen to remain neutral rather than taking a position for or against it. **Rep. Weber** stated that law enforcement had been relying on running license plates to obtain all necessary vehicle information. The sticker had no longer played the role it once had, as the relevant details were being accessed electronically. The ITD had been very helpful in providing information on the matter, and had indicated that eliminating the sticker would save approximately \$300,000, which could be used in a more effective and efficient way.

MOTION: **Senator Kohl** moved to send **H 533** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Semmelroth** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

RS 33330

RELATING TO HIGHWAYS AND RIGHTS-OF-WAY. **Senator Hart** explained that **RS 33330** had been created to clarify what constituted a valid public right-of-way or highway, particularly in cases where the original creation process had not been properly completed by a county. He described a case in Shoshone County that had gone to the Idaho Supreme Court. The dispute had involved a right-of-way crossing private property that a Jeep club had used to access Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land several miles up a canyon. The property owner had placed a gate across the road at his property line, blocking access. The Jeep club had continued attempting to use the route. The original paperwork to establish the road had begun in 1905, but the county commissioners had never fully completed the process. The right-of-way had been described using a metes-and-bounds legal description, which had been inappropriate for defining a road.

Senator Hart explained that the proposed legislation would have required a recorded survey and a public hearing process when creating a road. It would have clarified the distinction between a valid public right-of-way and one that had not been properly established.

MOTION: **Senator Adams** moved to send **RS 33330** to print. **Senator Kohl** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: LHTAC Annual Report and Update. **Laila Kral**, Administrator, Local Highway Technical Assistance Council (LHTAC) explained that LHTAC was created by the Legislature in 1994 under Idaho Code Title 40, Chapter 24. It served Idaho's local highway jurisdictions, including cities, highway districts, and the 33 counties with road and bridge responsibilities. The agency was governed by a 12-member council primarily made up of elected officials representing those local entities. She reported that LHTAC provided training, administered multiple state and federal funding programs, oversaw project delivery from planning through construction, and offered broad technical assistance. Through a stewardship agreement with the ITD, LHTAC administered approximately \$71 million annually in federal formula funds dedicated to local roads. One key program, the Local Rural Highway Investment Program (LRHIP), used exchanged federal funds to operate as a true grant program for smaller local projects.

Ms. Kral highlighted several federal-aid projects, including bridge replacements and emergency roadway repairs, noting how the programs helped local agencies address critical infrastructure needs. She described the agency's T2 training program, which offered safety, maintenance, construction, and leadership training for local roadway employees. The program also included recognition initiatives and safety equipment grants to improve work-zone protection. In technical assistance, she reported that staff had supported local agencies with bridge management, environmental permitting, federal grant applications, and other transportation-related needs. In the past year, LHTAC had helped secure \$15 million in competitive federal grant funding for local jurisdictions.

Ms. Kral summarized two major state-funded programs. The Children Pedestrian Safety Program (CPS) had invested \$36 million in 134 projects statewide since 2018, improving sidewalks and safe routes near schools and parks. The Leading Idaho Local Bridge Program (LILB), launched in 2022, had received \$564 million to repair or replace deficient bridges. She stated that 91 bridge projects had been completed, 55 were under construction, and 90 were in design. She emphasized that the use of state funds had significantly accelerated delivery compared to federal processes and had restored access for agriculture, recreation, and public safety across the state. She concluded by noting that the investment had supported engineering firms, contractors, and local economies throughout Idaho and had reduced the financial burden on local property taxpayers (Attachments 1 and 2).

DISCUSSION: **Chairman Okuniewicz** inquired how the LHTAC board coordinated with ITD and the federal aid programs, and who decided on the projects. **Ms. Kral** explained that federal highway funds ultimately came to ITD, which had been responsible for how the funds were spent and for reporting back to the federal government. Idaho Code required the council to make recommendations to the ITD on projects. Under a stewardship agreement with ITD, roles and responsibilities for these programs had been clearly defined. The council had taken applications from local agencies, scored them, and made recommendations to the board, which had consistently approved them for inclusion in the Transportation Investment Program. The agreement ensured that ITD and LHTAC staff did not duplicate efforts in managing the programs and projects.

Senator Hart asked if a county had been seeking funds whether the LHTAC staff provided assistance in writing grant requests, completing applications, or guiding them through the process. **Ms. Kral** explained that helping local agencies secure funding had been the most common request for technical assistance. They first reviewed the agency's project to see if it fit within one of the federal programs LHTAC administered. If not, they explored other federal competitive grants and helped match the project with available funding

MINUTES APPROVAL: **Senator Burtenshaw** moved to approve the Minutes of February 10, 2026. **Acting Senator Bjerke (Keyser)** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Okuniewicz** adjourned the meeting at p.m. 2:03 p.m.

Senator Okuniewicz
Chair

Melissa Price
Secretary