

MINUTES
SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

- DATE:** Tuesday, February 17, 2026
- TIME:** 1:30 P.M.
- PLACE:** Room WW53
- MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Okuniewicz, Vice Chairman Keyser, Senators Burtenshaw, Hart, Adams, Galloway, Kohl, Rabe, and Semmelroth
- 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 Okuniewicz** called the meeting of the Senate Transportation Committee (Committee) to order at 1:30 p.m.
- NOTE:** **Chairman Okuniewicz** proceeded to the next bill while awaiting Representative Chris Mathias's arrival to present **H 500**.
- S 1272** **TRANSPORTATION - Amends and repeals existing law to remove obsolete language.** **Senator Semmelroth** presented **S 1272** explaining that the legislation was a result of H 14 and the Idaho Code Cleanup Task Force enacted February 7, 2025. She reminded the Committee that under H 14, State agencies were directed to review their respective sections of Idaho Code and submit recommended updates through a portal to the Legislative Services Office Impact Review Team. That team reviewed the submissions and removed any proposals that were policy-related, as those were outside the scope of the code cleanup process. As a result, the bill before the Committee addressed only outdated, obsolete, or no-longer-relevant statutory language.
- Senator Semmelroth** explained that **S 1272** repealed or removed provisions that were no longer applicable. Beginning on page one, Section 2 repealed Sections 21-121 related to State registration for pilots, noting that the State had ceased providing pilot certifications in 2013. Sections 5 through 9 addressed outdated or discontinued specialty license plates. Sections 10 and 11 removed related references and administrative provisions tied to those repealed plates. Section 12 updated remaining code sections to reflect the removal of those obsolete plates and associated duties. **Senator Semmelroth** concluded that the bill was strictly a technical cleanup measure and requested that the Committee send the bill to the floor with a do pass recommendation.
- DISCUSSION:** **Senator Adams** referred to page four, Section 11 of the bill and asked for clarification regarding the stricken language, noting that it appeared to address an administrative process rather than a license plate. **Senator Semmelroth** responded that the language being removed pertained to administrative processes that no longer existed. She clarified that the section was not eliminating an active license plate program, but rather removing outdated procedural language tied to a discontinued administrative process.
- Chairman Okuniewicz** asked if Senator Semmelroth had worked with the Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) on the bill and whether she had received feedback from the department. **Senator Semmelroth** responded that ITD had re-reviewed

the identified sections of code that morning and confirmed they were in full support of the proposed changes.

MOTION: **Senator Kohl** moved to send **S 1272** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Adams** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

H 500 **MOTOR VEHICLES - Amends existing law to provide for human-powered vehicles, bicycles, and electric-assisted bicycles. Representative Chris Mathias**, explained that while the bill itself was simple, the circumstances leading to it dated back nearly two years. A teenage constituent had been lawfully riding his electric bicycle northbound in a bike lane when a vehicle passed him, cut in front of him, and caused a collision that resulted in injury. Law enforcement responded, investigated the incident, and cited the driver under Idaho Code 49-615, which required drivers to exercise due care to avoid colliding with pedestrians or persons operating human-powered vehicles. He stated the judge ruled that the statute, originally adopted decades ago, referenced only “human-powered vehicles” and had never been updated to include electric-assisted bicycles (e-bikes). Because an electric bicycle was not purely human-powered, the citation was overturned.

Rep. Mathais stated that the bill was designed to accomplish three objectives. First, it closed the identified loophole by clarifying that e-bikes were included within the protections of the due care statute, thereby ensuring accountability for motor vehicle drivers. Second, it clarified that e-bike riders were likewise required to follow the same traffic laws applicable to traditional cyclists, addressing a potential loophole that could otherwise allow citations against e-bike riders to be successfully challenged. Third, in Section 3 of the bill, the language was amended to ensure that both human-powered and electric-assisted bicycles were subject to existing safety requirements, including proper seating limitations. **Rep. Mathias** further clarified that the bill did not apply to scooters or other forms of motorized mobility devices. He briefly outlined the three classifications of electric bicycles: Class 1, which provided pedal-assist only up to 20 miles per hour; Class 2, which included a throttle and also ceased assistance at 20 miles per hour; and Class 3, which provided pedal-assist up to 28 miles per hour. He noted that higher-speed, motorcycle-style electric vehicles were not addressed in the legislation.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Adams** wanted clarification on the three classes of electric bicycles. **Rep. Mathias** re-iterated the three classes of electric bicycles to Senator Adams.

Chairman Okuniewicz stated that he did not intend to question the court's ruling but observed that the case appeared to have addressed only the criminal citation issued to the driver. He asked whether the ruling precluded any potential civil action, inquired about possible insurance ramifications, and questioned whether there were any additional outcomes resulting from the incident. **Rep. Mathais** responded that he did not believe there were any additional criminal charges beyond the traffic citation. He stated that the teenager involved in the accident was present to testify and might be able to provide greater insight into what occurred following the traffic court's decision.

TESTIMONY: **Daniel Murphy** from Boise, Idaho, testified in support of the legislation, stating that providing a safe environment for all who use Idaho's streets was a shared responsibility. He emphasized that whether operating motor vehicles, human-powered bicycles, or electric-assisted bicycles, all users must remain aware of their surroundings, follow the rules of the road, and respect one another to ensure safe transportation.

Sean Norton testified in support of **H 500** explaining that he was the teenage constituent involved in the 2024 e-bike accident referenced by Representative Mathias. He described being struck by a vehicle while riding in a bike lane, sustaining road rash, bruising, and a concussion. Although the driver was cited under Idaho Code § 49-615, the judge later ruled that e-bikes were not covered under the statute in the same way as traditional bicycles. He explained that the ruling highlighted the need to update the law to include electric-assisted bicycles. He emphasized that biking and e-biking remained important for Idaho families and communities and advocated for protections for all riders. He concluded by urging the Committee to send **H 500** to the floor with a do-pass recommendation.

DISCUSSION: **Chairman Okuniewicz** asked Mr. Norton whether he recalled being questioned about the court case and inquired if the ruling affected his ability to collect an insurance payment, noting that his e-bike had presumably been damaged. **Mr. Norton** explained that the judge had made it clear that, in the criminal or infraction proceeding, the court's role was not to determine fault. The judge ruled only that, under the language of Idaho Code § 49-615, the driver had not violated the statute. He confirmed that a separate civil case was later pursued, which addressed liability.

MOTION: **Vice Chairman Keyser** moved to send **H 500** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Kohl** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

PRESENTATION: **Farewell to Senate Page Shayla Tyler.** **Shayla Tyler** reflected on her experience, noting that she had not fully understood how detailed and deliberate the legislative process was. She shared that she had been surprised by the many steps involved, including repeated drafting, printing, and review—elements not clearly conveyed in a typical government class. She explained that the experience gave her a lasting appreciation for how legislation moved forward and the significant effort required by lawmakers to advance policy. **Ms. Tyler** stated that she would carry this understanding with her when advocating for issues within her own community. She shared that she intended to study abroad in Spain for a year to complete her general education coursework with the ultimate goal of attending law school.

ADJOURNED: There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Okuniewicz** adjourned the meeting at 1:51 p.m.

Senator Okuniewicz
Chair

Melissa Price
Secretary