



The Western Landowners Alliance advances policies and practices that sustain working lands, connected landscapes and native species.

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide additional information in support of HB 587 and the Grazing Improvement Program.

The Western Landowners Alliance (WLA) is a producer-led nonprofit with a mission to advance policies and practices that sustain working lands, connected landscapes and native species. Over the past two years, WLA has been strategically partnering with the Idaho Department of Agriculture to support the implementation of the Grazing Improvement Program (GIP). The additional language included in this bill is important as it allows the program to operate as intended and will ultimately help expand impact beyond what has already achieved, which is quite a lot.

Currently, WLA is deploying two grants in partnership with ISDA to support Grazing Improvement projects that provide both ecological and economic benefits to Idaho. The first grant supports virtual fencing projects on ranches recovering from wildfire. Through collaboration and partner cost-share, we are deploying **eleven virtual fence projects covering more than 600,000 acres of priority wildlife habitat in Idaho**. These projects help ranchers stay operational after fire, while also improving habitat for big game, sage-grouse, and anadromous. This is a clear win for both producer viability and conservation outcomes. And a huge success for the Grazing Improvement Program.

The second grant is broader in scope. In partnership with ISDA and other state and federal collaborators, WLA was awarded funding to support shovel-ready, producer-led projects that align state and federal conservation priorities with ranch-level operational goals. ISDA has received **31 producer-submitted GIP applications** for consideration, all of which represent high-quality opportunities. Eligible practices include water developments, fence modifications, riparian and mesic meadow enhancements, targeted grazing, and other range improvements. With available funds, we anticipate supporting an additional 7 to 10 projects. Beyond implementation, we will publish case studies highlighting specific practices and facilitate peer-to-peer learning opportunities for producers and land managers interested in participating in GIP or adopting similar range improvement practices.

These projects are supported by a strong coalition of partners, including ISDA, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), the Governors Office of Species Conservation (OSC), US Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), USDA Forest Service (USFS), Idaho Cattle Association (ICA), the Idaho Rangeland Resource Commission (IRRC), and University of Idaho and U of I Extension (U of I). This level of collaboration ensures both accountability and impact.

To date, **over \$1 million in direct funding is being deployed to support GIP projects, with an additional \$1.5 million in direct and indirect match leveraged through partnerships.** However, ISDA has received nearly \$2.5 million in additional funding requests through the program. That unmet demand reflects both the success and the need for the program.

HB 587 is crucial because it enables ISDA and its partners to move efficiently, leverage outside grants, and align available resources with producer readiness. It reduces delays caused by timing, budget cycles, or administrative barriers and allows the program to respond when producers are prepared to implement improvements.

The Grazing Improvement Program represents a producer-driven, cost-effective approach to strengthening Idaho's rangelands while supporting working agricultural operations. HB 587 provides the necessary support to continue scaling that success.

The Western Landowners Alliance values its partnership in advancing this program and looks forward to continuing to work with ISDA to ensure its success. We are happy to provide any additional information on request.

Thank you.



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