

MINUTES  
**SENATE RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Monday, March 23, 2026

**TIME:** 1:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room WW55

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chairman Burtenshaw, Vice Chairman Hart, Senators Harris, Cook, VanOrden, Kohl, and Taylor

**ABSENT/ EXCUSED:** Senators Guthrie and Okuniewicz

**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 1:03 p.m.

**S 1396** **PACIFIC FISHERIES LEGISLATIVE TASK FORCE - Repeals existing law to remove obsolete provisions relating to membership on the Pacific Fisheries Legislative Task Force.** **Senator Lakey** explained this legislation was a result of H 14, the Idaho Code Cleanup Act, passed during the 2025 Legislative Session. This legislation repealed Idaho Code § 67-452, which concerned Idaho legislator memberships in the Pacific Fisheries Task Force. The State of Idaho had not participated in task force activities since 2022 and Oregon repealed their statutory membership in 2016.

**MOTION:** **Senator Cook** moved to send **S 1396** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Taylor** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**H 855** **FISH AND GAME - Amends existing law regarding lifetime hunting and fishing licenses.** **Representative Petzke** explained this legislation changed the requirement to purchase lifetime hunting licenses. It required a person to have lived in Idaho for five years, instead of six months, before purchasing a lifetime hunting or fishing license.

**TESTIMONY:** **Ellery TuckerWilliams**, Legislative and Community Engagement Coordinator, Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG), testified in favor of **H 855**. She stated that this legislation addressed concerns about individuals moving to Idaho for a short period with the intent of obtaining residency to purchase a lifetime hunting or fishing license. These concerns had increased with IDFG's recent shift from an over-the-counter deer and elk tag system to a non-resident draw framework.

**DISCUSSION:** **Vice Chairman Hart** asked how residency would be verified. **Ms. Tucker Williams** responded that an Idaho hunting and fishing lifetime license had to be activated every year, so anytime someone activated their lifetime license certificate, IDFG verified their residency. **Vice Chairman Hart** asked if there were two types of lifetime licenses, one for residents and one for non-residents. **Ms. Tucker Williams** responded that an individual had to be a resident in order to purchase a lifetime license. When a lifetime licence was activated, if a licence holder was no longer a resident, IDFG verified that they were a resident when they purchased their lifetime license. **Vice Chairman Hart** asked what the advantage was for non-residents to purchase a lifetime license. **Ms. Tucker Williams** responded they would be able to purchase a tag as if they were a resident, rather than having to go through the draw like a regular non-resident.

**Chairman Burtenshaw** asked if a licence was reissued every year, or something held for five years. **Ms. Tucker Williams** responded that a licence had to be activated every single year.

**Representative Petzke** added that there was also a significant cost savings for lifetime licence holders as they did not have to purchase a non resident license every year.

**Senator Kohl** asked if it would be more feasible to take away someone's lifetime license if they moved out of state. **Representative Petzke** responded that people had been purchasing lifetime licenses for many years under a certain set of rules, and it would be unfair to take away paid-for licences because the rules changed. **Senator Kohl** asked if there might be other solutions, such as a grandfather clause. **Representative Petzke** responded that this legislation addressed the immediate problem of people moving to the state for six months just to obtain this license. If there were additional changes they wanted to make, such as creating a grandfather clause, they could be addressed in the future.

**MOTION:** **Senator Taylor** moved to send **H 855** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator Cook** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**. **Senator Kohl** requested that he be recorded as voting nay.

**HCR 34** **BEAR RIVER - States findings of the Legislature and reaffirms Idaho's rights under the Bear River Compact.** **Senator Harris** explained this resolution was designed to protect Idaho's water future by asserting Idaho's water rights under the Amended Bear River Compact, which was signed by Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming, and ratified by Congress in 1980. It reaffirmed Idaho's right to the first 125,000 acre feet of water in the lower division of the Bear River. It directed the Idaho Water Resources Board (IWRB) to provide reports on water supplies available for development and opportunities for further development, including estimated costs and timelines, and on their recommended and prioritized projects. IWRB was to then prioritize and expedite feasibility studies on projects identified in their reports. This resolution also required investment in modern equipment to scientifically document water usage and support future studies. It directed IWRB to use funds allocated in the \$30 million transfer to the water management account to support implementation of these reports and any related legislation.

**TESTIMONY:** **Paul Arrington**, Idaho Water Users Association, testified in favor of **HCR 34**. He stated this resolution called upon IWRB to gather information to help provide a sustainable water future for the Bear River Basin.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Cook** asked about the allocated funds to support implementation and if this legislation had a cost. **Mr. Arrington** responded that there was a preliminary study that was due in June and then a final study that would be due in the fall at the Interim Natural Resources Committee meeting. This legislation provided for the costs associated with preparing the study. The study would identify potential projects, but the approval and funding for those potential projects was separate from this legislation.

**MOTION:** **Senator Cook** moved to send **HCR 34** to the floor with a **do pass** recommendation. **Senator VanOrden** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**MINUTES APPROVAL:** **Senator Kohl** moved to approve the Minutes of February 25, 2026. **Senator VanOrden** seconded the motion. The motion carried by **voice vote**.

**PRESENTATION:** **Acknowledgement of Page - Antoine Taylor.** **Mr. Taylor** shared with the Committee some of his future plans, which were to attend his mission in Paris, France, and when he returned, to study business management at Brigham Young University with the goal of owning his own business.

**DISCUSSION:** **Senator Burtenshaw** asked what one thing surprised him the most about his time with the Senate. **Mr. Taylor** responded he was surprised about how interested he was in the topics that came before this Committee and how much he liked watching the debates on the Senate Floor. He enjoyed being able to see how the Senate and the Committee worked behind the scenes. **Senator Cook** challenged Mr. Taylor to help expand the page program and find two or three students to send to the program next year. **Mr. Taylor** agreed. He shared that his older brother enjoyed being a Senate page, and he knew his younger brother wanted to be a Senate page, so he thought after three positive experiences, his younger sister might want to be one, too.

**ADJOURNED:** There being no further business at this time, **Chairman Burtenshaw** adjourned the meeting at 1:25 p.m.

---

Senator Burtenshaw  
Chair

---

Shelly Johnson  
Secretary