

MINUTES
JOINT FINANCE-APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, March 26, 2026

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room C310

MEMBERS PRESENT: Senators Co-chairman Grow, Woodward, Cook, Bjerke (Bjerke), Hart, Carlson, Zuiderveld, Galloway, Ward-Engelking, Wintrow
Representatives Co-chairman Tanner (14), Miller, Furniss, Petzke, Manwaring, Mitchell, Price, Bruce, Harris, Green

ABSENT/ EXCUSED: None

CONVENED: **Co-Chairman Grow** called the meeting of the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee (Committee) to order at **8:01 a.m.** with a quorum present.

LSO STAFF PRESENTATION: **Trailer to H730: Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), Department of Health and Welfare - Alex Williamson, Senior Analyst, Legislative Services Office (LSO)**
Ms. Williamson presented a trailer appropriation for H 730 before the Committee. It included onetime funding of \$351,000 from the General Fund for system updates needed to implement changes to SNAP eligibility. She stated H 730 had already passed the House and was currently under consideration in the Senate.

MOTION: Moved by **Senator Cook**, for fiscal year 2027, for the Department of Health and Welfare, in the Division of Welfare, the addition of \$351,000 onetime from the General Fund for changes to the SNAP eligibility system; seconded by **Senator Bjerke**.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Wintrow** spoke against the motion, stating it was a waste of money since Idaho already had an effective annual verification system, making additional checks unnecessary.

CARRIED: **Ayes: 16**
Senators Grow, Woodward, Cook, Bjerke, Hart, Carlson, Galloway
Representatives Tanner, Miller, Furniss, Petzke, Manwaring, Mitchell, Price, Bruce, Harris
Nays: 4
Senators Zuiderveld, Ward-Engelking, Wintrow
Representative Green
Ab/Ex: 0
Both committees having voted in the majority, the motion has passed and without objection will carry a **DO PASS** recommendation. There being no objection, it was so ordered by **Chairman Grow**.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST: **Senator Woodward** requested and was granted unanimous consent to pull from the agenda trailer bills to H 793, H 944, and S 1325.

**LSO STAFF
PRESENTATION:**

Trailer to H898: State Historic Preservation Office, Office of Species, Minerals, and Energy Coordination - Noah Peterson, Analyst, LSO

Mr. Peterson stated H 898 moved the State Historic Preservation Office from the Idaho State Historical Society to the Office of Species, Minerals, and Energy Coordination. He said the change involved transferring 12 full-time positions and about \$1.7 million, requiring two steps: removing them from the Historical Society budget and adding them to the new office.

DISCUSSION:

Senator Ward-Engelking stated the Idaho Historical Society Preservation doesn't seem like a good fit for the Office of Species, Minerals, Energy, and Coordination.

Senator Woodward stated the proposed move has been a coordinated effort. One of the prime tasks of the State Historic Preservation Office is coordinating with the action of federal agencies to ensure that in construction, or actions by the federal government that were not damaging historical objects. And so they're integral part of the permitting process.

Senator Ward-Engelking questioned whether the change was recommended by the Governor.

Mr. Peterson stated that it was purely a trailer to H 898.

Lori Wolff, DFM Administrator stood to address the Committee. She stated the change was not in the Governor's original budget recommendation. It is a trailer bill for a bill that has passed on the House floor and has passed in Senate committee.

Representative Furniss stated he carried H 898 on the House floor and the change would better align the office with processes like NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act), improving coordination and making operations more streamlined and efficient under the new combined programs

Senator Galloway stated she would vote no as she did not have all needed information.

Representative Harris stated the Director of the Idaho Historical Society Janet Gallimore was in favor of the change.

Senator Wintrow stated it was hard to vote on a trailer that hasn't yet been discussed and debated. She also stated the two agencies could potentially be at odds with another.

MOTION:

Moved by **Representative Furniss**, for fiscal year 2027, for the Idaho State Historical Society, the ongoing reduction of 12.00 FTP, \$257,400 from the General Fund, and \$1,442,300 from federal funds, for a total reduction of \$1,699,700; seconded by **Senator Woodward**.

CARRIED: **Ayes: 15**
Senators Grow, Woodward, Cook, Bjerke, Hart, Carlson
Representatives Tanner, Miller, Furniss, Petzke, Manwaring, Mitchell, Price,
Bruce, Harris
Nays: 5
Senators Zuiderveld, Galloway, Ward-Engelking, Wintrow
Representative Green

Ab/Ex: 0

Both committees having voted in the majority, the motion has passed and without objection will carry a **DO PASS** recommendation. There being no objection, it was so ordered by **Chairman Grow**.

LSO PRESENTATION: **Mr. Peterson** stated the next item was the second half of the action that was just taken. This is to add the appropriation for the State Historic Preservation Office to the Office of Species, Minerals, and Energy Coordination. He stated the FTP and General Fund are exactly the same, however there was a minor difference between the amounts for dedicated and federal funds. This reflects the difference of how revenue from the Idaho Cultural Resources Information System, also known as ICRIS subscriptions, will be reflected in SMEC compared to how they're reflected in the Historical Society.

MOTION: Moved by **Representative Furniss**, for fiscal year 2027, for the Office of Species, Minerals, and Energy Coordination, the ongoing addition of 12.00 FTP, \$257,400 from the General Fund, \$150,000 from dedicated funds, and \$1,292,300 from federal funds, for a total addition of \$1,699,700; seconded by **Senator Woodward**.

CARRIED: **Ayes: 15**
Senators Grow, Woodward, Cook, Bjerke, Hart, Carlson
Representatives Tanner, Miller, Furniss, Petzke, Manwaring, Mitchell, Price,
Bruce, Harris
Nays: 5
Senators Zuiderveld, Galloway, Ward-Engelking, Wintrow
Representative Green

Ab/Ex: 0

Both committees having voted in the majority, the motion has passed and without objection will carry a **DO PASS** recommendation. There being no objection, it was so ordered by **Chairman Grow**.

LSO PRESENTATION: **Mr. Peterson** presented intent language before the Committee.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT: Requested by **Representative Furniss**, and granted by unanimous consent, the following language was adopted:

LANGUAGE: SECTION _____. EXEMPTION FROM EXPENSE CLASS AND PROGRAM TRANSFER LIMITATIONS. The Office of Species, Minerals, and Energy Coordination are hereby exempt from the provisions of Section 67-3511 (1) and (2), Idaho Code, allowing unlimited transfers between expense classes and between programs, for all moneys appropriated to them for the period July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. Legislative appropriations shall not be transferred from one fund to another fund unless expressly approved by the Legislature.

LSO STAFF PRESENTATION: **Trailer to S1288: Idaho High-Needs Student Fund, Public School Support - Kellen McGurkin, Analyst, LSO**

Mr. McGurkin presented the Trailer to S 1288, which had passed both chambers, before the Committee. He stated S 1288 created the Idaho High Needs Students Fund to help cover exceptional special education costs. The fund would be supported by a onetime \$5 million appropriation and cash transfers, with reimbursements distributed through an application process. He also noted that increasing special education spending would raise the state's federal maintenance of financial support requirement, obligating continued funding in future years or risking reductions in federal IDEA funds.

MOTION: Moved by **Senator Petzke**, for Public School Support, in the Student Support Division for FY 2027, from the High Needs Student Fund a total of \$5,000,000 onetime in Trustee and Benefit Payments; seconded by **Senator Ward-Engelking**.

DISCUSSION: **Senator Ward-Engelking** spoke in favor of the motion, stating there is a \$103 million gap between what districts are spending for special ed and what they're being provided in reimbursements by the federal government and the state. And the motion would help address that.

In response to a Committee question, **Mr. McGurkin** stated the motion was for a onetime cash transfer and onetime dedicated funding and the state's obligation under MFS will increase ongoing.

Representative Petzke stated the special ed student funding need is ongoing. The motion is just a onetime solution due to the tight budget year. The motion would fund onetime this year with these dedicated funds and the legislature will look at another solution next year when that comes around.

CARRIED: **Ayes: 14**
Senators Grow, Woodward, Cook, Bjerke, Galloway, Ward-Engelking, Wintrow
Representatives Tanner, Miller, Furniss, Petzke, Manwaring, Mitchell, Green
Nays: 6
Senators Hart, Carlson, Zuiderveld,
Representative Price, Bruce, Harris
Ab/Ex: 0
Both committees having voted in the majority, the motion has passed and without objection will carry a **DO PASS** recommendation. There being no objection, it was so ordered by **Chairman Grow**.

MOTION: Moved by **Representative Petzke**, for FY 2027, the transfer of \$1,000,000 from the Idaho Career Ready Students Program Fund to the Idaho High Needs Student Fund; seconded by **Senator Woodward**.

CARRIED: **Ayes: 14**
Senators Grow, Woodward, Cook, Bjerke, Galloway, Ward-Engelking, Wintrow
Representatives Tanner, Miller, Furniss, Petzke, Manwaring, Mitchell, Green
Nays: 6
Senators Hart, Carlson, Zuiderveld,
Representative Price, Bruce, Harris
Ab/Ex: 0
Both committees having voted in the majority, the motion has passed and without objection will carry a **DO PASS** recommendation. There being no objection, it was so ordered by **Chairman Grow**.

MOTION: Moved by **Representative Petzke**, for FY 2027, the transfer of \$4,000,000 from the Driver Training Account to the Idaho High Needs Student Fund; seconded by **Senator Ward-Engelking**.

CARRIED: **Ayes: 14**
Senators Grow, Woodward, Cook, Bjerke, Galloway, Ward-Engelking, Wintrow
Representatives Tanner, Miller, Furniss, Petzke, Manwaring, Mitchell, Green
Nays: 6
Senators Hart, Carlson, Zuiderveld,
Representative Price, Bruce, Harris
Ab/Ex: 0
Both committees having voted in the majority, the motion has passed and without objection will carry a **DO PASS** recommendation. There being no objection, it was so ordered by **Chairman Grow**.

LSO STAFF PRESENTATION: **FY 2027 Department of Fish and Game, LBB 4-015 – Janet Jessup, Principal Analyst, LSO**

Ms. Jessup explained that the Department of Fish and Game's fiscal year 2027 budget was being reconsidered by the Committee after it passed the Senate but failed in the House. She provided background on the department's statutory responsibility to manage and protect Idaho's wildlife, then walked through the governor-recommended budget enhancements.

She outlined 10 total enhancements, including about \$8.2 million in onetime funding for fish habitat projects in central and northern Idaho, \$4.05 million ongoing for Good Neighbor Authority projects, and \$500,300 ongoing in federal funds for fisheries operations. She described a \$1.1 million ongoing request to restore funding for seasonal and temporary staff, noting hiring challenges due to compensation limitations. She also highlighted \$200,000 onetime for wolf depredation control, \$791,100 ongoing for inflationary costs at fish hatcheries and labs, \$64,400 ongoing to expand communications capacity, and \$278,700 ongoing for IT licensing and support. In addition, she noted over \$10.2 million in replacement items, including vehicles, equipment, fish equipment, and enforcement tools.

MOTION: Moved by **Representative Harris**, beginning with the FY 27 JFAC Program Maintenance Budget: add \$8,210,800 onetime for fisheries habitat projects; \$4,050,000 for good neighbor authority projects; \$500,300 for inflationary costs at fisheries; \$200,000 for wolf depredation and control activities; \$791,100 for inflation at fisheries facilities; and \$426,300 onetime for OITS replacement items. For FY 2027, for the Department of Fish and Game, an additional \$8,287,900 from dedicated funds and \$5,890,600 from federal funds for a total of \$14,178,500 and to provide for reappropriation authority for previously appropriated Dedicated and Federal Fund moneys; seconded by **Representative Mitchell**.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION:

Moved by **Representative Furniss**, beginning with the FY 2027 JFAC Program Maintenance Budget: add \$8,210,800 onetime for fisheries habitat projects; \$4,050,000 for good neighbor authority projects; \$500,300 for inflationary costs at fisheries; \$710,300 to restore funding for temporary employees; \$200,000 for wolf depredation and control activities; \$791,100 for inflation at fisheries facilities; \$64,400 for customer communications services; \$278,700 for licenses and support; \$9,857,200 onetime for replacement items; \$426,300 onetime for OITS replacement items. For FY 2027, for the Department of Fish and Game, an additional \$14,570,000 from dedicated funds and \$10,519,100 from federal funds for a total of \$25,089,100 and to provide for reappropriation authority for previously appropriated Dedicated and Federal Fund moneys; seconded by **Senator Woodward**.

DISCUSSION:

Representative Furniss spoke in favor of the substitute motion, stating the budget was about half a percent, or \$800,000, less than the previous year's. He also expressed great respect for game wardens, praising their professionalism, dedication, and ability to safely perform their duties despite the risks of interacting with armed individuals.

Representative Petzke spoke in favor of the substitution motion. He stated money from hunting tags and a portion of ammunition sales goes directly to the Department of Fish and Game through Pittman-Robertson funds. He emphasized that this money is legally required to be used by the agency for related projects, such as the North Idaho shooting range funded by excise taxes. He argued that without proper spending authority, these funds would sit unused.

Representative Furniss explained that of the \$10 million in federal funds in the budget, nearly 75% was pass-through money, primarily from Pittman-Robertson excise taxes, with 14% from Dingell-Johnson funds and 25% from the Bonneville Power Administration for fisheries. He emphasized that these funds were not taxpayer dollars but rather federally collected or industry excise taxes routed through the federal government to Idaho.

FAILED (SUBSTITUTE MOTION):

Ayes: 11

Senators Grow, Woodward, Cook, Bjerke, Galloway, Ward-Engelking, Wintrow
Representatives Furniss, Petzke, Manwaring, Green

Nays: 9

Senators Hart, Carlson, Zuiderveld,
Representative Tanner, Miller, Mitchell, Price, Bruce, Harris

Ab/Ex: 0

Chairman Grow stated having failed to reach a majority in the House, the motion has failed and the Committee will go to the original motion.

CARRIED (ORIGINAL MOTION):

Ayes: 14

Senators Grow, Woodward, Bjerke, Hart, Carlson, Zuiderveld, Galloway
Representatives Tanner, Miller, Manwaring, Mitchell, Price, Bruce, Harris

Nays: 6

Senators Cook, Ward-Engelking, Wintrow,
Representative Furniss, Petzke, Green

Ab/Ex: 0

Both committees having voted in the majority, the motion has passed and without objection will carry a **DO PASS** recommendation. There being no objection, it was so ordered by **Chairman Grow**.

**UNANIMOUS
CONSENT
REQUEST:**

Requested by **Representative Harris**, and granted by unanimous consent, the following language was adopted:

LANGUAGE:

USE OF WOLF DEPREDATION FUNDS. Notwithstanding any law to the contrary, of the moneys appropriated in Section 1 of this act, \$200,000 from the Fish and Game (Other) Fund shall be used to enhance wolf trapping to manage wolf predation. The balance of the \$200,000 not expended for this purpose shall revert to the fund. The State Department of Fish & Game shall provide a report to the Joint Finance-Appropriations Committee detailing the use of funds by June 30, 2027. The format and content of this report will be determined in consultation with the Budget and Policy Analysis Division of the Legislative Services Office.

ADJOURNED:

There being no further business before the Committee, **Co-Chairman Grow** adjourned the meeting at **8:54 a.m.**

Senator Grow
Chair

Linsy Heiner
Secretary