



# CAPITOL REVIEW

## A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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### UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO AG ECON TOUR

Food Producers hosted eight students and three advisors from the University of Idaho College of Agricultural and Life Sciences for the annual Ag Econ Public Policy Tour. The tour was sponsored by Food Producers along with a number of farm organizations and commodity groups. The students and advisors participating in the tour included:

<u>Students</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
Mitch Jamison	Garfield, WA
Matthew Lampman	Bruneau, ID
Cole Lickley	Jerome, ID
Jason Montgomery	Eden, ID
Sarah Mosman	Nezperce, ID
Bradley Pipal	Meridian, ID
Inigo De Juan Razquin	Ordizia, Gipuzkoa, Spain
Beth Ropski	Moscow, ID
<u>Advisors</u>	<u>Hometown</u>
Dr. Chris McIntosh	Moscow, ID
Dr. Andres Trujillo-Barrera	Moscow, ID
Dr. Patrick Hatzenbuehler	Twin Falls, ID

The tour provided the students with the ability to experience different aspects of the legislative process. The students visited both House and Senate Agricultural Affairs Committees and observed the House and Senate during their deliberations on the floor. The tour highlighted presentations from Controller Brandon Woolf and the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. Students were able to listen to lobbyists speak about their personal experiences in the legislature and were able to sit in on Food Producers weekly legislative meeting. Thanks to everyone involved in helping to make this event such a success.

### CO-OP LEGISLATION

H60 has the primary purpose of updating Idaho's cooperative marketing association statute and ensuring that the statute is not more restrictive than federal law. The legislation will be carried by Rep. Britt Raybould, a freshmen representative out of District 34 in eastern Idaho. The bill seeks to update the existing

statute to make it more in line with the federal Capper-Volstead Act. It would add a provision to allow the current practice of one man, one vote and/or that the cooperative does not pay dividends on stock or membership capital in excess of 8% annually. There are a number of cooperatives operating within the state.

### NWACC/FFA DAY ON THE HILL

On Monday, blue jackets descended on Boise for the annual NWACC/FFA Cenarrusa Day on the Hill. You may have noticed that the name of ICC has been replaced by NWACC for the event. NWACC stands for the Northwest Agricultural Cooperative Council, which represents agriculture cooperatives in Idaho, Oregon and Washington. Presented with the NWACC Friend of the Industry Award was Senator Mark Harris, Soda Springs, and Rep. John Vander Woude, Nampa. Receiving Honorary State FFA Degrees from the Idaho FFA Association were Senator Carl Crabtree, Grangeville, and Rep. Mike Moyle, Eagle. Over 315 students and guests attended including Freda Cenarrusa, widow of Pete Cenarrusa for whom the event was named. Mr. Cenarrusa served the state of Idaho with over 52 years in public service. A special proclamation was read by Lt. Governor Janice McGeachin on behalf of Governor Brad Little commending the Idaho FFA on their work throughout the state. The Idaho Cooperative Council had been the sponsor of this event since the early 1980's.

### PERSONAL BILLS

With the deadline for personal bills coming quickly, we have seen a number of proposals printed that would likely not see much consideration if they went through the normal process. Personal bills are those that don't first go through a committee for a print hearing. All personal bills in the House are referred to the leadership-dominated Ways & Means Committee. House Speaker Bedke has continued the procedural practice following the lead of previous house speakers. Aside from personal bills, all bills must receive a committee's support to be introduced and obtain a bill number.

The most concerning personal bills are those that would undo eminent domain restrictions on municipalities that agriculture fought hard to enact and others that would drastically change minimum wages in Idaho. **H51** would amend existing law to remove language prohibiting the use of eminent domain for the purpose of recreational trails. A few years ago, agriculture lobbied hard to add this language addressing state and local ordinances and prohibiting them from taking private land for trails, greenways, walking or running paths, hiking paths, bicycling paths or equestrian paths, unless they were adjacent to a highway or street.

**H50**, one of three bills that attempts to allow or prescribe an increase in minimum wages, would specifically remove the restriction that no political subdivisions of the state can establish their own minimum wage. This would allow cities to set their own minimum wages, which, they have argued in the past, would be beneficial to resort towns like Sun Valley, Coeur d'Alene or McCall due to the cost of living. This line of reasoning has been rebuffed since there is already the ability of any employer to raise wages at any time and to adjust for workforce demands in individual communities.

**H54** addresses minimum wage from a different angle by removing the option of employers to pay training wages. Currently, an employer may pay an employee a wage as low as \$4.25 an hour during the first ninety consecutive calendar days of employment. The training wage also only applies those employees under the age of 20. In those professions with high turnover rates and low-skilled employment, the training wage is used to offset the time the employer trains and does not receive the full benefit of labor though compensating the employee. Lastly, **H55** would incrementally increase the minimum wage from \$7.25 to \$12.00 by July 1, 2021. Many employers and businesses will likely find this approach unpalatable.

### REMODEL FOR HOUSE MEMBERS

After the remodel of the Capitol Building, there has been some ongoing concerns and discussion that perhaps the Senate was treated differently than the House. In fact, the Senators each have a private office (not large by any means) but House members (70), for the most part, have cubicles. Speaker of the House Bedke has proposed taking part of the first floor of the Capitol and moving the Treasurer out of her space and building additional offices for the House. This idea first surfaced with past Treasurer Ron Crane who approached Governor Butch Otter and together they opposed the idea. Now with a new treasurer and a new governor, the discussion has surfaced again. The remodel comes with a hefty price tag. You may

remember that the original proposal for the remodel was to have two levels in what was called the Garden Level. That did not happen during the recession as a cost savings and only one level was built. Stay tuned and we will let you know if we hear more rumblings or if jackhammers move on site.

### WATER BILL UPDATE

**H1** flowed unopposed through the House of Representatives. It was previously voted on unanimously in the House committee and once reaching the floor, it was a perfect vote (67-0-3) to send the bill over to the Senate. A hearing on H1 was held in the Senate Resources and Environment Committee and it was sent out of committee to the Senate floor to be voted on. H1 places into Idaho Code one of the Basin 63 Settlement Agreement components that have been agreed on by irrigators, the state of Idaho and the Suez Company. The legislation would add a provision to Idaho water law that any new storage facility in excess of 1,000 acre-feet would be subordinate to existing water storage rights. Although the legislation is applicable statewide, it places into statute a protection for Basin 63 irrigators that their existing storage water rights remain senior storage water rights, regardless of any new water storage developments that exceed 1,000 acre-feet of storage.

### SENATOR BAYER APPOINTED

Senator Regina Bayer was appointed to fill the vacancy left by her son in District 21. Former Senator Cliff Bayer was hired as Congressman Russ Fulcher's chief of staff earlier this month. Senator Regina Bayer was chosen from three nominees that were submitted to Governor Little's office from the Republican Committee for District 21. Little noted that Senator Bayer was a small business owner and has more than 30 years of experience as a real estate agent and broker. She has also served as the former president of the Boise Regional Realtors.

### SLOW START TO THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

It seems we have had a rather slow start to the legislative session this year. Here is a recap of the length of recent legislative sessions:

2018 – 80 days	2017 – 80 days
2016 – 75 days	2015 – 89 days
2014 – 74 days	2013 – 88 days
2012 – 81 days	2011 – 88 days

The session is to last no more than 90 days. However, many will remember 2009 when the session went 117 days due to issues related to transportation in Idaho.

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