



CAPITOL REVIEW

A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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A Weekly Legislative Report

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SIMPSON AND DAMS

Food Producers of Idaho hosted **Congressman Mike Simpson** for a presentation on his “Energy and Salmon Concept.” A number of groups were invited to join the Zoom call and a total of over 220 participants were part of the hour-long presentation followed by question and answer. So many questions were submitted by participants that time did not permit to answer. These were forwarded to Congressman Simpson and he will respond and share his answers. **NOTE:** If you would like a copy of the recording from the presentation please contact Gloria at gloria@amgidaho.com.

HEMP LEGISLATION

A milestone was accomplished when H126, dealing with industrial hemp, passed the House Agricultural Affairs Committee this week. H126 had been held in committee while additional information was secured from the Idaho State Police. Several committee members stated that they would vote to support sending the measure to the House floor but would not commit at this time what their vote would be on H126 once it is on the House floor for debate. Chairman of the Agricultural Affairs Committee, Rep. Clark Kauffman, will carry the measure on the House Floor.

IDAHO AG IN THE CLASSROOM

Rick Waitley, State Director of the Idaho AITC program, presented to the House Agricultural Affairs Committee about the Idaho AITC program this week. Waitley provided the committee with history, current programs and a packet of education materials that are delivered to classrooms throughout the state when requested by teachers. The material was primarily provided by commodity and agriculture organizations who utilize the AITC reputation in Idaho classrooms to distribute their commodity materials. The program was started by former USDA Secretary of Agriculture John Block in the **mid 1980's**. The Idaho program was established at the same time and currently the **AITC program is in all 50 states, Guam and Puerto Rico.**

COALITIONS MAKE THINGS WORK

A good example of coalitions that come together on specific issues was S1132 – dealing with Driver’s Authorization Cards for foreign labor. While the issue was spearheaded by the Idaho Dairymen’s Association, Idaho Cattle Association and Milk Producers of Idaho, a number of groups joined in support of S1132. Here is a list: Associated General Contractors, Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce, Con Paulus Chevrolet, Food Northwest, Food Producers of Idaho, Idaho Association of Commerce and Industry, Idaho Bankers Association, Idaho Dairymen’s Association, Idaho Grain Producer’s Association, Idaho Ground Water Appropriators, Idaho Hay and Forage Association, Idaho Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Idaho Hop Growers Association, Idaho Lodging & Restaurant Association, Idaho Milk Processors Association, Idaho Onion Growers’ Association, Idaho – Oregon Fruit & Vegetable Association, Idaho Potato Growers Association, Idaho Retailers Association, J.R. Simplot Company, Milk Producers of Idaho, NW Agricultural Cooperative Council, PODER of Idaho, Roman Catholic Diocese of Idaho, South Central Idaho Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Twin Falls Chamber of Commerce. **S1132 was held in committee and an interim committee** was suggested to review the legislation and other possible solutions to undocumented workers traveling on Idaho roads. The Idaho Sheriffs Association expressed opposition related to administration of issuing the card among other problems they identified.

AGRICULTURE PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

H252 revises the definition of land actively devoted to agriculture **to include pivot corners or land that is used to support the agricultural use** of the qualifying property, such as land that is used to store agricultural commodities or equipment. There have been a few county assessors that have not correctly taxed this type of property. Idaho Code already covers this issue but unfortunately different assessors

sometimes misinterpret certain portions and clarification is needed. H252 aims to clear the air and make sure that pivot corners and storage areas for agricultural commodities and equipment is taxed as agricultural property. Representative Aaron von Ehlinger is the sponsor of the legislation.

REDRAWING DISTRICT LINES

To keep **legislative and congressional districts equal in population**, the boundary lines are redrawn every 10 years by the Commission for Reapportionment. The commission will be appointed this year, after Idaho receives its 2020 U.S. Census data from the federal government. A series of public meetings and hearings are typically held beginning in June, but recent news from the U.S. Census Bureau says it will not be delivering data until the **end of September**. **This will significantly compress the time available for Idaho to do reapportionment.**

Once the Reapportionment Commission's meetings are scheduled, [you will be able to find them on the legislature's website](#). You will also be able to watch livestreams of the meetings on the legislature's website. When our current legislative districts were set in 2011, the population of each legislative district was about 45,000 people. In this next reapportionment, the districts **are expected to be set at about 51,000 people** each. The latest population estimates suggest that **Ada County and Canyon County may pick up another legislative district.**

CLOUD SEEDING

Cloud seeding has been done in various areas of Idaho for a number of years. H266, defines cloud seeding and provides that the water resource board is responsible to authorize cloud seeding. As meteorologists monitor winter storms crossing Idaho mountains, they look for opportunities to **increase the amount of snow that falls** in drainages that feed Idaho's rivers and reservoirs. The goal of cloud seeding programs can also be to provide additional water for Idaho Power's hydropower projects, which provide reliable, affordable, and clean energy. Increased snowpack also benefits irrigators, winter recreationists, river users, and fish and wildlife.

The original program began in 2003 to increase snow accumulation in the south and middle forks of the Payette River watershed. In 2008, Idaho Power expanded its cloud seeding efforts by enhancing a program operated by a group of counties and other stakeholders in the upper Snake River system above Milner Dam.

More snow means more water in Idaho's reservoirs and more water running through hydroelectric dams. According to Idaho Power, the additional runoff

caused by cloud seeding in Idaho energizes approximately 57,5000 homes annually. Analyses conducted by Idaho Power since 2003 indicate the annual snowpack in the Payette River Basin increased an average of approximately 12%. The typical cloud seeding **season runs from the beginning of November through the end of April.**

With the continued participation in cloud seeding by water districts, conservation districts and power companies, H266 begins to address the practice in Idaho Code. H266 looks to clarify that water generated through cloud seeding will be administered in accordance with the prior appropriation doctrine and limits liability for participation in certain cloud seeding projects.

NEW LEGISLATORS

This week we wanted to introduce the last two freshmen legislators.

Rep. David Cannon District 31 (Bingham County)



Raised in Blackfoot, Idaho, in a construction business family; graduated from Blackfoot High School; served church mission in Argentina; undergraduate from Brigham Young University in economics; obtained law degree from the University of Utah College of Law; attorney (Cannon Law, P.A.); part owner of reclaimed wood business (Trestlewood); member of Blackfoot Rotary Club (president, 2013-14); race director of Wolverine Canyon Marathon/Half/10K/5K/1K, raising money and awareness to fight cystic fibrosis; avid participant in sports: basketball, running, tennis, disc golf; spouse: Lisa; four children and two granddaughters.

Senator Kevin Cook District 30 (Bonneville County)



Born in Spanish Fork, Utah; graduated from Weber State University in Utah with a degree in computer science; software engineer for the Idaho National Laboratory; owned and operated a software consulting business for 12 years; lived in Bonneville county for 21 years on a gentleman's farm; member of the NRA and the Idaho Falls Chamber of Commerce; spouse: Cheri, 31 years; four children; three grandchildren.

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