



CAPITOL REVIEW

A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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A Weekly Legislative Report

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A LITTLE PAUSE

Today, both the Senate and House cancelled their scheduled committee meetings and voted to recess until **Tuesday, April 6**. In the past week there have been over **five members of the House test positive for COVID-19**. There is still a substantial amount of legislation, including appropriations that must be passed for the new fiscal year starting July 1. The House and Senate are also waiting to return to participate in the discussions regarding federal stimulus money and how that should be appropriated.

TRANSPORTATION FUNDING

It was recently reported that Idaho is growing by **1,000 new residents per day**. This growth is putting stress on Idaho's infrastructure. Rep. Joe Palmer, Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, proposed an increase in the distribution of sales tax to Transportation funding from 1% to 4.5% with 3% going to the state and 1.5% going to local highway districts. H342 passed the House on St. Patrick's Day by a vote of 63-4-3. The measure would allocate no less than \$45 million to the state **Transportation Expansion and Congestion Mitigation (TECM)** account and no less than \$11.5 million to the **Highway District Account (HDA)**. For FY 2022 the anticipated distribution to the state is **\$56 million** to TECM and **\$28 million** to HDA. The measure is now in the Senate Transportation Committee.

SENATE AG LEARNS ABOUT ALFALFA/CLOVER SEED

Davis McConnell, President of the **Idaho Alfalfa and Clover Seed Growers Association** spoke before the Senate Ag Affairs Committee this week about the importance of this industry in providing seed throughout the nation. McConnell, a grower in the Caldwell area answered a variety of questions

related to leafcutter bees and production of quality alfalfa seed.

GREAT WEEK FOR U OF I CALS

Dean Michael Parrella reported the following action by the legislature and Governor this week:

- The **Agricultural Research and Extension Service (ARES)** budget has passed with unanimous votes in both the Idaho Senate and House and is on its way to Governor Little for his signature.
- Governor Little signed House Bill 225 Thursday, directing **\$3 million to the state's Permanent Building Fund** for improvements to the **CALS' Parma agricultural research campus** to help promote agriculture and rural Idaho.
- Coincident with the Governor's allocation of \$3 million to Parma, CALS has completed raising **\$3 million in donations** and **\$1 million in CALS** investment to complete the overall fundraising campaign for this important project - the estimate is that the construction project will be out for bids this fall with construction commencing in 2022.
- On Tuesday, the Land Board unanimously approved the sale of the Ag Endowment property in Canyon County (the old Caldwell Research Center). The property will be up for public auction in August. The proceeds from the sale will be deposited in the Land Bank and will be held for 5 years. Governor Little emphasized that the exchange of Morrell Act property for additional research property is the preferred approach. The Board is aware of CALS desire to purchase the additional 640 acres in Rupert for the CAFÉ project.

FARM WORKFORCE MODERNIZATION ACT

Congressman Mike Simpson co-authored and sponsored the **Farm Workforce Modernization Act** which passed the US House of Representatives with a strong bipartisan vote of **247-174**. The bill, which was first introduced in 2019, would provide agriculture workforce stability by allowing current workers the ability to get right with the law while also reforming the H-2A visa program to provide more flexibility for employees. The bill had support from over **250 different organizations nationwide** with nearly **30 of that number coming from Idaho**.

THE HOME STRETCH

We have written about most of the legislation that is important to the clients that we serve. Now, we are at that point in the session where we are monitoring the progress of these various pieces of legislation. We may not continue our weekly Capitol Review if we do not have new legislation to report on or updates that warrant the production of **Capitol Review**. However, we encourage you to visit the website for Association Management Group at www.amgidaho.com. Go to the Legislative Update tab and you will find the latest update to the Green Sheet showing all legislation that we are monitoring as well as past copies of the Capitol Review.

It seemed like things moved very slowly at the beginning of the 2021 session, but a check on legislation after 10 weeks of progression indicates we were not too far off track from previous years and have seen more legislation passed than years prior:

PROGRESS REPORT						
Week-to-Week Comparison						
March 19, 2021						
WEEK 10	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
New legislation prepared	794	775	688	771	752	798
Changes, amendments, and engrossments	<u>172</u>	<u>188</u>	<u>186</u>	<u>179</u>	<u>198</u>	<u>266</u>
	966	963	874	950	950	1064
INTRODUCTIONS						
Bills (both houses)	539	523	474	527	482	518
Resolutions, Memorials, Proclamations (both houses)	36	62	57	73	68	66
ACTION						
Bills Passed (both houses)	144	152	116	238	121	205
Bills awaiting signatures	61	39	34	129	58	136
Bills signed by the Governor	83	113	82	107	63	68
Law without Governor signature	0	0	0	2	0	1
Resolutions, Memorials adopted	6	23	12	30	13	17
BILLS PASSED BY ONE HOUSE (and pending in other house)						
Senate	85	59	81	43	50	46
House of Representatives	115	112	54	73	67	38

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