



# CAPITOL REVIEW

## A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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### A Weekly Legislative Report

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#### ISDA LEGISLATION

The Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) has proposed legislation related to the Red Tape Reduction within Title 22 of Idaho Code. H455 has three components: simplifying the fee structure of the fertilizer program by repealing tonnage fees, simplifying the fee structure of soil and plant amendment program by repealing tonnage fees and repealing Title 22, Chapter 32 which governs the artificial production of rainfall. This law is outdated and was superseded by the passage of H266 in 2021. **This legislation would create a more streamlined framework for fertilizer, soil and plant amendment registration.** Currently, customers pay a registration fee and then separate fees for tonnage. This process is cumbersome for customers and takes considerable time for ISDA staff to review. This legislation would **eliminate the process of paying by tonnage.** This type of structure was successfully implemented in the ISDA feed program several years ago.

#### ONION GROWERS RECOGNIZED

The **Idaho Onion Growers' Association** and the **Malheur County Onion Growers' Association** gathered on Tuesday, February 1 at the Nampa Civic Center for their annual conference. During that meeting, two outstanding onion producers in Idaho and Oregon were recognized for their commitment to the industry.

**Jon Watson:** Jon graduated from Parma High School where he was Student Body President and then pursued his education at the University of Idaho. Jon's involvement in the family farm started at an early age. Jon married Margie, his wife in 1975. The Watson's have two married children, Brad and Emily and four grandchildren. Jon has held a number of leadership roles in the City of Parma and in associations affiliated with the fruit and vegetable industry. He has had years of involvement with the Idaho Eastern-Oregon Onion Marketing Order and specifically on the Promotion committee. In 2009, Jon became co-chairman of the

Treasure Valley Ag Coalition that worked to sustain the operations of the University of Idaho Parma Research and Extension Center. Jon has been a dedicated leader in the industry and community.

**Jim Farmer:** Jim was raised in Nyssa, OR. Jim was only 16 years old at the time his parent's lives were both taken. The family was dispersed to various relatives, but Jim remained in the Nyssa area with family friends. Jim and his wife Peggy attended high school together in Nyssa and were married in 1972 – having recently celebrate 49 years of marriage. The Farmer's raised five children and are proud to talk about their ten grandchildren. In 1982, Jim and his brother Warren founded Fort Boise Produce. In 2004 the company moved to their current location but continues to operate the original facilities in Nyssa. Jim was a member of the Northwest Farm Credit Board of Directors for 10 years and during his service to NWFCs made several trips to Washington, DC to advocate for agriculture. Jim has been active in the Idaho-Oregon Fruit and Vegetable Association. The company is now operated and managed by Joe Farmer, son of Jim and Peggy.

#### WORKER'S COMPENSATION

H464 specifies that injuries, arising from employer mandated vaccinations, **shall be compensable under the Idaho workers compensation laws of Idaho.** Employees injured by mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations **would be eligible for workers' compensation payments** under H464 that advanced to the House floor Monday. H464 is co-sponsored by House Assistant Majority Leader Jason Monks and Rep. Bruce Skaug. Idaho employees can already receive compensation for injuries related to workplace vaccines. However, the bill's sponsor, said there has been confusion regarding COVID-19. **Some vaccine injury claims are being denied,** even in cases when an employer agrees they should be covered. H464 would eliminate any confusion currently in code and potentially reduce any litigation on the matter. H464 applies specifically to workers who are required to get

the COVID-19 vaccine by their employer, and who later suffer some type of adverse reaction. It does not matter whether they wanted the vaccine in the first place, or only received it to keep their job. A handful of people testified in opposition to the bill over concern that it essentially codifies an employer's right to require vaccines.

### REDISTRICTING

Since the Idaho Supreme Court's ruling that the Idaho Commission for Reapportionment legislative maps will remain and there is starting to be movement in the ranks of Legislators. Here is a quick update related to what we know at this time. **Those current legislators who will not be seeking re-election in their current seat include:**

Senator Daniel Johnson	Rep. Sally Toone
Senator Steven Thayne	Rep. Clark Kauffman
Senator Grant Burgoyne	Rep. Fred Wood
Senator Patti Anne Lodge	Rep. Gary Marshall
Senator Lee Heider	Rep. Marc Gibbs
Senator Steven Bair	Rep. Kevin Andrus (running for Senate)

### **Legislators running for constitutional office and not planning to return to the Legislature include:**

Senator Mary Souza for Secretary of State  
Rep. Scott Bedke for Lt. Governor  
Rep. Priscilla Giddings for Lt. Governor  
Rep. Dorothy Moon for Secretary of State

We hear rumors of others who have not announced at this time and will keep you posted as additional names surface. Already we are looking at potentially 16 new names in the legislature for 2023.

### BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

The Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) presented their budget before the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee this week. Located inside DEQ's request authorized by the Governor, was **\$20 million for best management practices (BMP's) projects in Idaho**. The funding is intended to supplement the agency's federal nonpoint source program grant. In 2021, legislation was passed to establish a specific fund for the annual appropriation of state general fund dollars to support and fund nonpoint source agricultural best management practices projects around Idaho. **DEQ identified complications with appropriating, allocating, and disbursing these funds all within the same fiscal year.** The nature of these projects span multiple calendar years and makes it difficult for recipients of the subawards to get the work completed and invoices submitted for reimbursement before the end of the fiscal year it was appropriated. Private landowners

and conservation districts have participated since the BMP program since its inception in 2017 to support implementation of agricultural best management practices to help meet water quality standards in impaired water bodies in Idaho.

### SUBSTITUTE LEGISLATORS

We have several substitute legislators at this time and they are expected to serve the entire legislative session.

In District 6 and serving for 6<sup>th</sup> term Senator Dan Johnson, will be Leland farmer **Robert Blair**. Blair is a fourth-generation farmer from the Leland area, near Kendrick, growing wheat, barley and other traditional annual crops. Blair's wife, Rhonda, is a special education teacher in the Kendrick school district. Their son, Dillon, works at CHS Primeland in Moscow, and Logan, their younger son, is a senior at the University of Idaho, where Blair and his wife are both alumni. In addition to farming, Blair said that he travels across the country and internationally as a consultant about how to effectively use drones (unmanned aerial vehicles) in agriculture. According to Blair, he was the first farmer in the United States to use a drone to help manage crops beginning in 2006. Drone-based photography provides an aerial view of his crops which helps him target fertilizer, water and pesticide use. Blair has held leadership positions in the agriculture world, both as the past president of the Nez Perce County Farm Bureau and the Idaho Grain Producers Association as well as a USA Eisenhower Agriculture Fellow.

In District 31 and serving for 8<sup>th</sup> term Senator Steve Bair, **Julie Van Orden**. Born in Pocatello, Van Orden graduated from Blackfoot High School, attended College of Southern Idaho and Idaho State University at the Vocational-Technical School. She has served as Idaho PTA State President, Snake River School District Board of Trustees Chairman and as a Japanese American Citizen League member.

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