



CAPITOL REVIEW

A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

AMG : RICK WAITLEY | ROGER BATT | BENJAMIN KELLY | PATXI LARROCEA-PHILLIPS
55 SW 5TH AVENUE, SUITE 100 MERIDIAN, ID 83642 PH: 208-888-0988 FX: 208-888-4586

A Weekly Legislative Report

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VEHICLE EMISSIONS TESTING

Recent transportation modeling has shown that due to fleet modernization and other factors, the vehicle emissions testing program is no longer as effective as it once was in reducing emissions. S1254 would remove the requirements for vehicle emissions testing in the Treasure Valley starting July 1, 2023. It also removes statutory language that established a Treasure Valley Air Quality Council and provides a process for the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to decide whether to recommend to the legislature that Regional Air Quality Councils be formed to address future air quality concerns when stated thresholds are met. In 2010, the Canyon County and City of Kuna program was established in response to a push to reduce emissions. It is administered through a contractor and overseen by DEQ. Ada County and its cities entered into a Joint Exercise of Powers Agreement with DEQ wherein the parties agreed the current program met all the requirements. Ada County's program began in 1984, due to violations of the carbon monoxide ambient air quality standard.

The program is implemented under local ordinances through the Air Quality Board, as a control measure in the carbon monoxide state implementation plan (SIP) to reduce pollution. The SIP was approved by EPA and is currently federally enforceable. This SIP will "sunset" at the end of 2022. DEQ intends to submit a SIP revision including a technical demonstration (emission inventory and modeling) to show the change won't affect our ability to maintain compliance with the national ambient air quality standards. DEQ expects to submit that plan later this year or early 2023 for EPA approval. Once approved the federal requirement to operate the Ada County emission testing program would be removed. The Canyon County and Kuna programs would expire at the same time as the Ada County program, but do not require the technical demonstration to EPA. S1254 made it out of the Senate committee and will be debated on the Senate floor before going to the House.

EMERGENCY POWERS

Throughout the pandemic there has been criticism by some state leaders as to how Governor Little has responded to COVID-19. During the 2020 Special Session and 2021 Legislative Session in Boise, many bills were proposed but did not get full traction. Legislators were seeking proposals that, in some officials view, would balance the powers between the legislative and executive branches of government as it relates to emergencies. This week H514 was passed out of committee which would prohibit the state of Idaho, a political subdivision or an officer of the state from mandating the usage of a face mask, face shield or other face covering. The overall subject of the bill does deal with mask mandates but also includes more details in the actual language that causes concern.

Specifically, Food Producers of Idaho is opposed to the language in paragraph (1)(c) of the proposed section that would prohibit state facilities from requiring a face mask, face shield or face covering as a condition of entry, regardless of the reason for the requirement (i.e. even if unrelated to preventing spread of an infectious disease). This would place undue health and safety risks upon our university research labs and state-operated diagnostic and testing labs.

On Thursday, H514 was pulled back by the sponsor for a possible re-write. At the beginning of the 2020 Legislative Session, Food Producers of Idaho voiced its concerns of tampering with the Governor's emergency powers in regard to natural disasters. Food Producers has stood firm since, and all the way through, that they oppose legislation that places in peril our state's ability to respond to natural disaster emergencies.

NOXIOUS WEED AWARENESS LUNCHEON

The Idaho Noxious Weed Control Association held its annual legislative awareness luncheon this week. Legislators from the House and Senate Agricultural Affairs and Resources Committees were invited to

attend the luncheon. Members from industry and the legislature gathered and heard presentations from the Southern Idaho Biological Control Group and the ISDA – Noxious Weed Division.

Terry Ruby, Southern Idaho Biological Control Group (SIBC) explained that the group uses summer crews consisting of local junior high and high school students to implement, monitor, and expand biocontrol efforts. Student crews are able to 1) make new biocontrol insect releases, 2) monitor establishment of initial releases in the target area, 3) determine when insect populations are ready for collection and further distribution, 4) collect and distribute insects into other target areas, and 5) conduct long-term monitoring of the plant community to see that insects used for biocontrol have successfully reduced populations of the target plant.

The SIBC program has successfully used insect biocontrol agents by employing student crews, better known as "Bug Crews." Besides implementing biocontrol, the program provides students with a unique opportunity to work, learn, and experience first-hand the effects of invasive plants and use of biocontrol agents, specifically insects, that can reclaim local rangelands dominated by invasive plants. In turn, the students are helping land managers and researchers collect data, monitor plots, and collect insects for further distribution. The SIBC program continues to be successful and can be used as a model for control of invasive plants in other areas. Jeremy Varley, ISDA explained the three species that were added to the Early Detection Rapid Response noxious weed list through negotiated rulemaking this past summer.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

The Senate will be considering S1253 after it passed out of committee this week. The bill will remove a provision that excludes participants in youth employment and job training programs from being employed by the state of Idaho. The purpose of this legislation is to align the efforts of the Workforce Development Council in facilitating the expansion of work-based learning to the workforce needs of state of Idaho agencies. It eliminates a clause currently in code that prohibits youth served under the Council's employment and training programs from being employees of the state of Idaho. Elimination of the clause does not require agencies to hire youth served by the programs, but allows consideration of youth as candidates for open state positions, internships or apprenticeships.

The Idaho Workforce Development Council, as an independent office under the Governor, was established in October 2017 by Executive Order 2017-

13. The executive order responded to recommendations made by Governor Otter's Workforce Development Task Force to "Increase the role and responsibilities of an industry-driven Workforce Development Council to champion the development and implementation of a statewide, strategic workforce development plan that meets industries' needs today and tomorrow."

U OF I PUBLIC POLICY TOUR

Food Producers of Idaho hosted the 20th annual U of I Ag Econ Public Policy Tour this past week. Twelve students and two advisors were involved in the tour which centered around the capitol building and helping the students to grasp how policy is developed and who are the players. They had the chance to host legislators for dinner on Monday evening and to attend the Ag Lobbyist meeting on Tuesday and Food Producers of Idaho weekly meeting on Wednesday. Additionally, the students heard from lobbyists that work directly with the ag industry and those that work in industries that indirectly affect the ag industry. The students attending this year included:

William Drury, Malad City;
Luke Edwards, Coeur d' Alene;
Lane Hailey, Eltopia, WA;
Darin Jenneskens, Worley;
Diana Lewis, Gaston, OR;
Moria Michaels, Days Creek, OR;
Nicole Nance, San Diego, CA;
Cassidy Plum, Meridian
Sydney Plum, Meridian
Samantha Short, Cove, OR;
Regann Skinner, Jordan Valley, OR
Daelas Zieber, Nampa.

Accompanying the students were advisors: Dr. Chris McIntosh, Head of the Department for Ag Econ and Rural Sociology and Professor Norm Ruhoff.

ELECTIONS

Our apology to **Rep. Kevin Andrus**. In the Capitol Review of 2/4 it was listed that Rep. Andrus is running for the Senate. That was an incorrect statement. We have added to the list of legislators that are not running for office in this year's primary since the 2/4 report:

Senator Michelle Stennett
Senator Mark Nye
Senator Christy Zito

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