



CAPITOL REVIEW

A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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A Weekly Legislative Report

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[NOXIOUS WEEDS](#)

H94 was introduced on Monday by Representative Doug Pickett. H94 will amend Idaho Code Section 22-2405 to incorporate language that defines when the individual **notice to a landowner to control and eradicate noxious weeds is deemed satisfied and served**. This clarification would prevent absentee landowners from arguing that they were not present to receive service. Additionally, the clarification would prevent landowners from evading service. Currently, landowners have the duty to maintain their properties so that they are free from noxious weeds and the cost of controlling the noxious weeds shall be the obligation of the landowner. The noxious weed lists are defined and kept within the administrative rules at the Idaho State Department of Agriculture. The correction and clarification was brought forward when a **county noxious weed department was sued** by a constituent because it was alleged that the department did not provide proper notice. The lawsuit settled outside of court, but noxious weed departments now need to clarify language in statute so that it can be prevented from happening again.

[RURAL NURSING LOAN REPAYMENT](#)

H84 was printed and referred to House Health and Welfare on February 3. The bill sponsor is Representative Dori Healy, District 15 in Ada County. H84 establishes the **Rural Nursing Loan Repayment Program** in Idaho, which will be administered by the Department of Health and Welfare. The program provides for the payment of nursing education loans for eligible nurses who practice in rural and underserved areas in the state. The program is funded by legislative appropriations, health care industry contributions, private donations, and federal funds. A rural nursing loan repayment grant review board will be appointed by the director of the department to oversee the program and ensure it meets its objectives. The board will be composed of representatives from rural hospitals, long-term care facilities, nursing schools, health centers, nursing associations, and healthcare organizations. If

adopted this legislation would incentivize nurses to practice in rural areas, and by its nature would support infrastructure for the agricultural communities in Idaho.

[ENDOWMENT LAND PROTECTION](#)

Senator Mark Harris introduced S1049 this week. This bill would add a new section to Idaho Code, Title 58, Chapter 1, to deal with closures and restrictions on State endowment land. The purpose of S1049 is to protect State land from being abused and misused. Over the last several years, **public lands have seen a sharp increase in users**. The legislation states that the State Board of Land Commissioners provides notice to the public of any restrictions, closures, prohibitions, and regulations on State endowment land. Proper posting is required, and fines and restitution requirements are outlined. If a person is found guilty of violating the statute and subsequent rules that are promulgated, the person would get a warning ticket. On the second violation the violator would receive an infraction and fine of \$250.00 and the third offense would carry a misdemeanor. The State Board of Land Commissioners will be tasked with promulgating any rules surrounding a closure, restriction, regulation and prohibition, and with any rule that provides for the closure, restriction, regulation or prohibition there will be proper notice posted on the Idaho Department of Lands' website and at the physical location.

[ISDA REQUESTS 2% INCREASE IN BUDGET](#)

Two areas of Idaho's growth are impacting the Department of Agriculture budget: the food-production sector and the state's population. One of the major areas impacting consumers and production ag folks is the **Division of Weights and Measures**. The ISDA oversees nearly 36,000 measuring devices in gas stations and grocery stores. According to Acting Director Chanel Tewalt this is an increase of 27% in recent years. The list of areas impacted by growth does not stop there: the **animal health lab** last year handled about 50,000 brucellosis test samples, up more than tenfold from 2015. This is due to an increase in new

beef cattle processing capacity that has come online with more expansion in this industry on the horizon. The invasive species unit funded in the 2022 legislative session for additional equipment and staff which resulted in hiring five full time employees and equipment for their use. However, the mobility of society and increased number of visitors to Idaho has resulted in increased traffic at roadside stations that check watercraft. Currently the ISDA budget is \$51.13 million. More than **\$30.56 million** is from dedicated funds, from industry and user fees. The state general fund contributes about **\$13.08 million** and the federal government about **\$7.48 million**.

What is the **2% increase** going to be used for? Here is the shopping list that ISDA submitted to the budget committee:

- \$80,000 for Weights and Measures to maintain operations, travel, fuel and supplies
- Supplies and software for the animal health lab
- 1% increase for fresh fruit and vegetable inspectors

At the current time, the ISDA's goal is to inspect all gas stations annually and all scales both on and off the farm. This is not the case in some states and industry applauded the Department for their dedication of resources to maintain accurate weighing devices throughout the industry for both the buyer and the seller.

2023 LARRY BRANEN IDAHO AG SUMMIT

The theme of the 2023 Larry Branen Idaho Ag Summit is **“New Frontiers – Driving Agriculture Innovation.”** The Summit will be held in Boise on February 20-21. A copy of the Summit schedule and registration information can be found at www.idahoagsummit.org. Registrations can be downloaded and emailed to Patty at patty@amgidaho.com or faxed to our office at 208-888-4586. Registrations received prior to **Monday February 13** will be given the early bird discount. The planning committee in coming up with the theme have included three primary components in the Summit:

Keynote Speaker: Mark Limbaugh

Mark is an Idaho native and currently President of the Ferguson Group in Washington, DC. Mark grew up on the family farm near Fruitland and earned his BS in Accounting Cum Laude from the University of Idaho. Mark will be shedding light on the new Farm Bill and how the environment is in Washington, DC at this time.

The second presentation will be by Dr. Jodi Johnson – Maynard on the **USDA NRCS Climate Smart Grant** recently received by the University of Idaho. Jodi will team with other faculty members to report on the timing and various aspects of the grant program.

The third presentation will be in regard to one of Idaho's agriculture growing segments – **AgriTourism**. We will hear from four different operations located throughout Idaho in a show and tell panel featuring each operation.

The noon luncheon will feature the presentation of five **Governor's Awards for Excellence in Agriculture**. The award winners being recognized include:

Education/Advocacy
Susi Larrocea, Meridian

Environmental Stewardship
Justin Place, Hamer

Marketing Innovation
Jim and Hillary Lowe, Kuna

Technical Innovation
Darin Moon, Burley

Lifetime Achievement
Scott Brown, Soda Springs

We hope to see you at the 2023 Idaho Ag Summit February 20-21.

CONFIRMATION HEARING

Chanel Tewalt, recommendation of former ISDA Director Celia Gould to be her successor will be appearing before the Senate Ag Affairs Committee on Valentine's Day, February 14 for a confirmation hearing. The recommendation of the Committee will then go forward to the entire Senate for their vote. Tewalt has served as deputy director of ISDA since 2021. Prior to that time, she was chief operating officer. Tewalt's total involvement at ISDA spans 15 years. The appointment by Governor Brad Little came at the recommendation of former Director Gould prior to her retirement in January. Gould held the position since 2007 and is the **first woman** to be appointed to the position in Idaho's history.

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