

MINUTES  
**HOUSE RESOURCES & CONSERVATION COMMITTEE**

**DATE:** Thursday, January 23, 2020

**TIME:** 1:30 P.M.

**PLACE:** Room EW40

**MEMBERS:** Chairman Gibbs, Vice Chairman Gestrin, Representative(s) Moyle, Shepherd, Wood, Boyle, Vander Woude, Mendive, Kauffman, Blanksma, Addis, Lickley, Moon, Raybould, Rubel, Toone, Mason (Nash), Necochea

**ABSENT/  
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Moyle, Kauffman, Blanksma

**GUESTS:** The sign-in sheet will be retained with the minutes in the committee secretary's office until the end of the session. Following the end of the session, the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Services Library.

**Chairman Gibbs** called the meeting to order at 1:30pm.

**MOTION:** **Rep. Toone** made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 15, 2020 meeting. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

**James Taylor**, Director, Arthur B. Robinson Center on Climate and Environmental Policy, The Heartland Institute, a public policy organization, stated he hopes this presentation, on Idaho specific climate information, will help inform lawmakers to craft the best possible climate related policies for the people of Idaho. Mr. Taylor first covered global and national climate issues and then discussed Idaho specific climate issues. He explained, based on data collected and studied by the European Science Foundation, Greenland Ice Core Project, the climate over the past 10,000 years was actually warmer than it is today and taken in that context, today's temperatures are actually abnormally cool. He remarked on data from the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report which mirrors these findings. He explained more recently, over the past 40 years, global warming has been slower than predicted, and as a result, the United Nations had to modify and update its warming prediction models. Even more recently, the 100+ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) temperature stations located across the United States, and away from populated urban areas, have provided data showing there has been no significant warming since at least 2004.

**Mr. Taylor** then focused his presentation on Idaho. He stated over the past 100 years, temperatures in Idaho have risen slightly, but less than what the United Nation's models had been predicting. More specifically, the high temperatures have basically remained the same, while the lower temperatures, over the coldest months, showed a slight warming, making Idaho temperatures less extreme, not more extreme. Looking specifically at Idaho within the 2004 NOAA temperature models, the data shows no significant warming. Mr. Taylor then moved on to precipitation trends in Idaho. He discussed over the past 100+ years, Idaho is benefitting from more precipitation at the best time of the year and a slight decline in precipitation during what is considered the wetter time of the year, which reduces the risk of flooding. He explained agriculture is benefitting from these temperature and precipitation trends. The 2019 USDA Idaho Statistical Bulletin recorded potatoes, wheat, barley, hay, and sugar beets all having record yields between 2011 and 2018.

In response to questions regarding collaboration with the Idaho based science industry, **Mr. Taylor** responded that he did not work with any science based organizations from Idaho but rather relied on Idaho specific data and reports from national sources like NOAA, United Nations, NASA, and the USDA.

In response to a correction that legislation had not been passed last Legislative Session authorizing an interim legislative committee to study the effects of climate change in Idaho, **Mr. Taylor** apologized for that error and stated he would correct his report. He stated he's very passionate about this topic and wants to provide accurate data.

It was stated to **Mr. Taylor** there had been no mention of wildfires and snowpack within his report or presentation, yet in recent years Idaho scientists have reported, due to climate change, there had been a 100% increase in the size of wildfires, fire seasons have lengthened by 47 days, and 16,000 square miles of burned forests are attributed to the effects of climate change. Additionally, Idaho scientists project that by the year 2050 there will no longer be snow in the southern third of Idaho creating grave impacts on the snowpack which is tied to the agriculture industry. With all that in mind, the question to Mr. Taylor was how does this information impact his conclusion that climate change has had no adverse effects on Idaho? Mr. Taylor responded wildfires are a component of drought along with the human factors associated with the management of fires. He continued by stating precipitation and drought would be the impact from climate change, with drought being the biggest factor. But, he concluded the data shows over time across the United States and in Idaho specifically, there has been an overall decrease in drought.

**Ed Schriever**, Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, stated he is pleased to introduce to the committee the members of the Fish and Game Commission. They are Chairman **Jerry Meyers**, Salmon Region; **Brad Corkill**, Panhandle Region; **Daniel Blanco**, Clearwater Region; **Tim Murphy**, Southwest Region; **Greg Cameron**, Magic Valley Region; **Lane Clezie**, Southeast Region; and **Derick Attebury**, Upper Snake Region.

**Jerry Meyers**, Chairman, Idaho Fish and Game Commission, thanked the Legislature for their continued open communications and positive working relationship with the Commission.

**Ed Schriever**, Director, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, presented the annual update on **H 230**. He stated this bill has been significant in providing resources to the Department, as well as providing resources to help the Department resolve conflicts between wildlife and agricultural communities. The first element of this bill is the Price Lock. It was a novel approach to a resident fee increase. He explained the Department determined that roughly 30% of the resident hunters and anglers bought licenses five out of five years, so if they could encourage more residents to buy more regularly, with more participation even at the locked rate, revenues increase. He explained with the Price Lock, if a resident purchased a license the first year (2017) and continued to purchase a license each year after, they would continue to pay the 2017 locked rate. The Price Lock also applies to purchasing multi-year licenses. All other residents purchasing licenses outside of the Price Lock pay the 20% higher rate. The growth in revenue since 2017 is from the resident side of the equation since nonresident license purchases have always sold out.

**Mr. Schriever** stated, the next element of this bill is the funding element. **H 230** provided additional fiscal resources to the depredation program's two components; prevention and claims. He explained every resident pays a \$5.00 license endorsement and nonresidents pay a \$10.00 license endorsement to help fund this program. Half of that endorsement, or approximately \$1 million every year, is split evenly between prevention and claims. Funds from other agency programs also help fund the depredation program, including funding a winter feeding program. Any money still in the account at the end of each year is now held in that account. They no longer transfer remaining funds to the sportsmen access account. Instead, half of the endorsements, or approximately \$1 million, funds the sportsmen access program for fishing, hunting, and trapping where there was no access before. Mr. Schriever stated another outcome of **H 230** was the ability to increase personnel and fiscal resources to enhance the Department's ability to proactively address landowner's concerns within the prevention component. Overall, the Department has built over 340 stack yards for stored crops with a dozen more planned for this spring. He stated they provide the materials and the landowners do the construction. For growing crops, which are more of a challenge to protect, in 2019 the Department seeded public lands to increase/improve forage to entice wildlife away from private lands.

Wrapping up, **Mr. Schriever** stated the Access YES! Program continues, with willing landowners signing up allowing hunters and anglers to use their properties on an annual basis. Currently there are 89 agreements in place for a total of approximately 311,000 private acres and approximately 514,000 public acres. An additional \$100,000 has been added to bolster the program. For fishing access an additional \$150,000 has been added to develop a new boating/fishing access site on the Snake River in Hammett and to enhance over 340 boating access sites statewide. Finally, in 2018, the Commission entered into an agreement with the Land Board using funds generated from **H 230** as a match for recreational access to 2.4 million acres of state endowment lands. This year, in their Large Tract Program, they secured 14 agreements with private timber companies to provide access to over 900,000 acres for hunting, fishing, and trapping, a significant benefit for recreational use for the people of Idaho.

In response to questions regarding bringing down the wolf numbers, **Mr. Schriever** explained the Commission added hunting and trapping seasons across the state. Most recently, the Commission extended the trapping season by starting a month earlier (October vs November) with foothold traps, realizing there is a higher success rate when trapping without snow on the ground. The average harvest of trapped wolves in the fall had been 55 statewide, but now with the earlier start to the season, this past fall the number of wolves harvested was 138 statewide. He stated with these changes added to the spring harvest numbers, they are projecting the highest harvest from hunting and trapping since the delisting of wolves in 2011. Additionally, with the recent approval for the removal of diverters from wolf snares, they anticipate trappers will utilize snares more frequently adding to the increased harvest of wolves.

**ADJOURN:** There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:53pm.

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Representative Gibbs  
Chair

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Tracey McDonnell  
Secretary