

MINUTES
HOUSE RESOURCES & CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Thursday, February 15, 2024

TIME: 1:31 P.M.

PLACE: Room EW40

MEMBERS: Chairman Mendive, Vice Chairman Shepherd, Representatives Boyle, Vander Woude, Blanksma, Manwaring, Yamamoto, Raybould, Durrant, Hill (Brown), Mickelsen, Nelsen, Pickett, Raymond, Tanner, Burns, Necochea, Galaviz

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Representative(s) Vander Woude

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

Chairman Mendive called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Chairman Mendive recognized **Rep. Brown**, who has been substituting for **Rep. Hill**, and **Natalie Chrysler** who has been serving as the committee page for the past six weeks. With their time ending he asked both of them to say a few words about their experience, and presented Ms. Chrysler with a thank you gift.

Chairman Mendive put the committee at ease 1:35 p.m. to recognize the page for her service. **Chairman Mendive** called the meeting back to order at 1:36 p.m.

H 468: **Rep. Raymond**, District 31, presented **H 468** saying it creates a partnership between those who raise livestock in the state of Idaho and the Idaho Dept. of Agriculture. Approximately 55% of Idaho is rangeland, open country that is mostly uncultivated but it is hospitable for livestock and wildlife, and this legislation aims to create a better situation for both. It establishes an account for monies intended for statewide range improvements. It adds two positions to an existing grazing board who are to be nominated by the industry and appointed by the governor. **H 468** is intended to increase local involvement in the management of Idaho rangeland and enhance rangeland production.

Cameron Mulroney representing the Idaho Cattle Association; **Jerry Wroten** representing the Cattle Producers of Owyhee County and the Idaho Cattle Association; **Russ Hendricks** representing the members of the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation; **Patxi Larrocea-Phillips** a lobbyist representing the Idaho Wool Growers Association, testified **in support of H 468**.

MOTION: **Rep. Mickelsen** made a motion to send **H 468** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

Rep. Pickett spoke **in support of H 468** saying it not only supports industry people but it aims to prevent the invasion of noxious weeds.

Rep. Blanksma called for a Point of Order, saying according to House Rules members are to be in their seats to vote. **Chairman Mendive** acknowledged the point and **Rep. Raymond** returned to his seat to vote.

Rep. Raymond declared a Rule 80.

**VOTE ON
MOTION:** **Motion carried by voice vote.** Rep. Raymond will sponsor the bill on the floor.

H 485:

Rep. Raymond, District 31, introduced cosponsor **Rep. Sauter** of District 1 to present **H 485**. He explained that his district covers Bonner and Boundary Counties and includes three different mountain ranges. The Selkirk, Cabinet, and Yaak mountain ranges all have grizzly bears so livestock depredation is a prevalent issue. **H 485** is drafted to address grizzly bear depredation, and conflict prevention. Many people think grizzly bear attacks happen out in the middle of nowhere but frequently they involve 4-H animals who are kept close to homes. His district has noticed a higher occurrence of domestic animals being killed by predator wildlife. He responded to several committee questions, one point being that if endangered species could be managed within our state it would improve the situation.

Rep. Raymond summarized some points in the testimony, spoke about the inadequate funding federal and state agencies have to address these problems and he answered some committee questions.

Scott Rigby, a cattle rancher from Rexburg who grazes cattle in Fremont and Clark Counties; **Darcy Lammers** a rancher from Boundary County; **Val Hammond** a rancher from St. Anthony who grazes cattle in Fremont and Clark Counties; **Tori ONeal** a cattle rancher from Lemhi County and representing a cattle grazing association; **Dexton Lake** representing the Idaho Farm Bureau Federation; **Trew Lammers** a rancher from Bonners Ferry; **Cameron Mulrone**y representing the Idaho Cattle Association; **Patxi Larrocea-Phillips** representing the Idaho Wool Growers Association and Sheep Industry; **Zach Miller** an Idaho rancher who grazes cattle in several eastern counties, all spoke **in support of H 485**. They complained of an increasing grizzly bear population which is leading to increased incidents of depredation. They elaborated on the financial losses experienced in the form of live stock deaths, the damage that frequently occurs to fences and buildings during attacks, their investments in electric fences, exterior lighting, the utilization of range riders, or range dogs for conflict management, and the losses they experience due to low breeding rates. Currently there is little incentive to report depredation to oversight agencies, the process is time consuming and it is difficult to determine the predator(s) involved. Those who testified believe state management of endangered species, as opposed to federal government management, will improve the situation.

Rep. Raymond thanked everyone for their testimony and for driving long distances to be at the meeting today. He also explained some of the technical difficulties involved in trying to get this bill just right.

**UNANIMOUS
CONSENT
MOTION:**

Rep. Raymond asked for **unanimous consent to hold H 485 until a time certain**, Wednesday February 21, 2024, so some technicalities can be adjusted. There being no objection the request was granted.

Rep. Nelson spoke about his concerns related to human conflicts with grizzly bears.

Rep. Pickett declared a Rule 80.

ADJOURN:

There being no further business to come before the committee the meeting adjourned at 3:11 p.m.

Representative Mendive
Chair

Andrea Blades
Secretary