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"The liberties of our Country, the freedom of our civil constitution are worth defending at all hazards; and it is our duty to defend them against all attacks. We have received them as a fair Inheritance from our worthy Ancestors. They purchased them for us with toil and danger and expense of treasure and blood; and transmitted them to us with care and diligence. It will bring an everlasting mark of infamy on the present generation, enlightened as it is, if we should suffer them to be wrested from us by violence without a struggle; or be cheated out of them by the artifices of false and designing men. Of the latter we are in most danger at present. Let us therefore be aware of it. Let us contemplate our forefathers and posterity; and resolve to maintain the rights bequeathed to us from the former, for the sake of the latter." -Samuel Adams

Farm Bureau Legislative Conference

This week the Idaho Farm Bureau hosted a legislative conference where members heard directly from lawmakers and agency officials about issues that are important to Idaho agriculture.

The meeting kicked-off with Virgil Moore, the Director of the Idaho Department of Fish & Game. Director Moore discussed several aspects of the Department's big game depredation program as well as the emergency feeding efforts that are taking place around the state due to the severe winter conditions. Director Moore also shared with Farm Bureau members the details of an enhanced depredation program that the Fish & Game Commission will be considering. If approved by the Commission, the enhanced program will be proposed to the Legislature and if adopted will provide additional ways for Fish & Game to assist landowners in mitigating for damage done to their crops by big game animals.

Farm Bureau members then heard from several Legislators including Senate President Pro Tem Brent Hill (R-Rexburg), Speaker of the House Scott Bedke (R-Oakley), Rep. Maxine Bell (R-Jerome), Co-Chairman

of the Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee (JFAC), Senator Carl Crabtree (R-Grangeville) freshman member of JFAC, Rep. Judy Boyle (R-Midvale), Chairman of the House Agricultural Affairs Committee and Senator Lori Den Hartog (R-Meridian), Vice-Chair of the Senate Agricultural Affairs Committee. These legislators shared their insights and views on several issues that are being considered by the legislature such as transportation funding, education, stockwater rights, dyed fuel enforcement, the budgeting process and general fund revenues, HJR5, the severe winter weather and the damages that have occurred, public lands management and several other issues.

After the legislative panels, Celia Gould, Director of the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA), addressed attendees and shared some statistics from the University of Idaho which illustrated how important agriculture is to the state economy. She also discussed efforts to digitize brand inspections and livestock health certificates which will significantly reduce the time needed for traceback purposes. Director also spoke about the efforts to ensure that aquatic invasive species don't get a foothold

in Idaho through expanded boat inspection station locations and hours, issues caused by recent flooding and the request for dairies to self-report to ISDA if they discharge waters off of their property despite their best efforts to avoid doing so.

Later that evening, the Idaho Farm Bureau hosted legislators and their guests at a "strolling buffet" at the Riverside Hotel in Boise. The event is a way for Farm Bureau members to say thank you to Idaho Legislators for the work they do to protect and promote Idaho agriculture. Farm Bureau members also have the opportunity to sit down with legislators from their district and visit about issues that affect their agricultural operations.

The group of about 250 members and legislators chatted throughout the evening. Some of the topics members discussed included protecting private property, the crop residue burning program, stockwater legislation, protecting the supermajority vote required by the Constitution for bond levies, dyed fuel enforcement, and invasive species funding. As always, the strolling buffet was an enjoyable evening for all who attended.



Idaho Farm Bureau's Governmental Affairs Report

500 W. Washington St., Boise, ID 83702 www.idahofbf.org (208) 342-2688

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Senate and House Have Joint Meeting on Oil and Gas

The Senate and House Resource Committees held a joint meeting on Wednesday to hear a presentation from the Interstate Oil & Gas Compact Commission regarding Idaho's oil and gas regulatory program. Early in 2016, Idaho Department of Lands requested a comprehensive State Oil and Gas Regulatory Exchange assessment to evaluate Idaho's overall regulatory framework, compare existing programs/processes to similar states, clarify rules and definitions, acknowledge current oil and gas technology, and identify any potential issues for consideration.

John Baza, Director of Utah's Division of Oil, Gas and Mining, and a member of the peer review team that performed the assessment informed the committees that there are "no substantive gaps" in Idaho's oil and gas administrative rules. The team also found that Idaho's current well spacing approach is appropriate for the state's current stage of development.

The report also recognizes that the state has the necessary tools in place to adjust spacing as needed. Twelve other considerations were considered as part of the review, ranging from horizontal well standards, Class II UIC wells, recycling of produced water, etc. The full report can be found at the following website: <http://www.statesfirstinitiative.org/>

A number of bills dealing with the state's oil and gas industry were also printed this week. One of these bills, S1100, sponsored by Senator Abby Lee (R-Fruitland), will add to and update the current statutes regarding oil and gas to align with industry standards and increase transparency in production and development. The bill establishes minimum setback standards for wells from section lines, and also adjusts the minimum percent of mineral interest acres in a spacing unit for an integration application from the current 55% to 70%.

The statement of purpose for S1100

says that the bill amends state code by adding a new section requiring that when payment is made to any owner of a royalty interest, certain information shall be included on the payor's check stub or on an attachment to the form of payment and to define royalty payments; revises confidentiality provisions; clarifies metering requirements and responsibilities; defines a statewide spacing size; prohibits co-mingling of production without prior metering; revises application for integration order provisions, to remove an exception to requirements regarding good faith efforts to inform uncommitted owners of an intent to develop mineral resources in a proposed spacing unit and to revise confidentiality provisions; adds definitions and updates outdated language in the statute.

S1100 will likely be heard in the Senate Resource Committee in the coming week.

National Affairs Update

As part of the Idaho Farm Bureau Legislative Conference, participants had the opportunity to hear from Idaho's congressional delegation during Wednesday's breakfast. Each member spoke of the new Trump administration and the differences that they have been able to observe thus far. Many members talked about the slow approval of key cabinet positions that have hindered the new administration from full operation.

Despite the slow Senate confirmation of Trump's cabinet, Congress has been able to review and reject many of President Obama's last minute regulations that were passed before he left office. The Congressional Review Act, or CRA, allows Congress to review any regulation passed by a previous administration in its last 60 legislative days of office. BLM's Planning 2.0 is among the many rules that are being targeted with the CRA.

The following are some of the highlights from each of the members call:

Senator Crapo talked about the repeal of the estate tax and important progress

that they hope to make on the issue, proposing a third federal district judge for Idaho, and legislation that would improve the transparency and require state approval of any national monument designation.

Congressman Simpson talked about the Sage Grouse Recovery Act, mineral production on federal lands, proposing a third federal district judge, and the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act.

Congressman Labrador spoke about immigration issues in general, the Congressional Review Act and repealing BLM's Planning 2.0, progress of his management of federal public lands bill, and about his term limits bill.

Senator Risch spoke about the improved National Monument Designation Act, securing our nation's energy infrastructure, the repeal of the death tax, and also proposing a third federal district judge for Idaho.

Farm Bureau expresses our appreciation to the Congressional members and their staff for participating in this event.

Crop Residue Burning

Legislation that would change burn approval criteria for field/crop residue burning (CRB) has made it through the Senate and is on to the House. S1009 would improve the CRB approval criteria that would otherwise greatly limit the number of burn days throughout the burning season. This change in the statute is needed due to EPA's change to the Ozone National Ambient Air Quality Standard of 2015.

On Monday, February 20, at 1:30 PM in room EW41, the House Environment, Energy & Technology Committee will hear the bill. Those people who use CRB on their operations, or who have an interest in testifying on the bill are invited to attend.

Idaho Farm Bureau Policy #70 states, "We oppose air quality standards that are more strict than the current standards under the CRB program." **IFBF supports S1009**

Taxpayer Transparency Bill

This week the House Revenue and Taxation Committee, chaired by Rep Gary Collins (R-Nampa), heard a bill which seeks to give taxpayers more information on their property tax notice. H154, which is sponsored by Rep Ron Nate (R-Rexburg) would require property tax notices to individually list each bond that the property was being taxed for, the date the bond will be paid off, the levy rate for the bond and the amount that is due from the taxpayer for each bond. Currently, many taxing notices roll all information for bonds, no matter how many there are, into one line on the notice. This prevents the taxpayers from

really knowing how many bonds they are currently paying for, and how much they are being taxed for each individual bond.

During the hearing, it was noted by County Treasurers that they don't have that type of information. This begs the question, if they don't have that information, then how can they possibly know how much tax to charge each parcel of land? It was noted by some that if you buy a number of items at a store, you typically receive a very detailed receipt listing each item purchased, the purchase price of each item, and the total amount, with the sales tax listed as a separate line item. Why should property taxes be any

different? It would not be very difficult to list each bond out, so taxpayers know exactly what they are paying for. This is a simple transparency issue that will provide more information to taxpayers.

The bill originally required showing the amounts that each bond levied over the previous two years for each property, but the committee felt that it would be a technical challenge to fit that information onto the tax notices, so the committee sent H154 to the amending order to remove that provision. It is expected that the House will pass H154 with the amendment.

HJ1 – U.S. Agriculture Memorial

A joint memorial that recognizes the strength, efficiency, safety and importance of American agriculture was introduced last Friday in the House Agriculture Affairs Committee.

Representative Randy Armstrong (R-Inkom) is the sponsor of the joint memorial, which acknowledges that the strength of a nation rests on its ability to provide safe and reliable food, fiber and fuel for its citizens. Idaho's agriculture and agribusiness sectors represent the state's largest industry, making Idaho the fourth

largest state economy in the nation. The memorial states that governmental regulation requires American producers to meet the highest standards in the world regarding environmental and labor protections, wage rates, and food safety.

As imports and exports increase in the U.S., American farmers and ranchers are forced to compete with producers from other countries in both their own domestic markets and those abroad. The memorial, therefore, requests that those foreign producers and companies

interested in participating in the U.S. market be held to the same food safety standards and that any inspection or audit be paid for by that foreign producer/company. Furthermore, the memorial urges the need for American farmers, ranchers, and food processors to be allowed to compete freely and trade fairly on a level playing field.

HJM1 will likely be heard in the House Agriculture Committee in the coming week.

How to Contact Legislators

Website	www.legislature.idaho.gov
Legislative Information Center.....	208-332-1000
Toll Free & TDD.....	800-626-0471
Fax.....	208-334-5397
E-mail.....	idleginfo@lso.idaho.gov
Regular Mail.....	P.O. Box 83720, Boise, ID
.....	83720-0038 (House)
.....	93720-0081 (Senate)
Street Address	State Capitol, 700 W. Jefferson, Boise, ID 83720