



## **Idaho Council on Industry and the Environment**

### **Week of March 3, 2008**

*This is a weekly roundup of some of ICIE's activities in and around the Idaho Legislature. Staffing limits mean we can't cover every meeting. If there's an item of interest to you at an upcoming meeting of one of the environment or agriculture committees, let us know and we'll try to cover it. Agendas are available at [www.state.id.us](http://www.state.id.us). Click on "Legislative" and click on "Calendars and agendas." (For copies of previous Saturday Summary reports, go to [www.icie.org](http://www.icie.org))*

### **Senate Resources & Environment, March 3, 2008**

The Senate Resources and Environment voted this week to move SCR 128 to the Senate floor with a do-pass recommendation. The resolution, sponsored by Senators Kelly, Stennet, Langhorst and Chairman Schroeder enjoyed the support of several organizations in attendance who offered testimony, including the Idaho Conservation League, Climate Solutions, Inc., Conservation Voters for Idaho and Exergy Development of Idaho.

The resolution acknowledges the benefits of developing new energy conservation technology to position Idaho to take advantage of new markets that will open up in the field because of anticipated federal regulation of greenhouse gasses. Senator Kelly noted that this resolution was a natural continuation of the work the Executive Branch began two summers ago with the Governor's Energy Plan.

Idaho Fish and Game representatives presented information on the sage grouse, with Chairman Schroeder noting that there is a disconnect with the different parties involved: rangeland managers, Fish and Game Department and hunters. This disconnect is, in part, what led to the reconsideration of the 2004 ruling of the US Fish and Wildlife Service's assertion that listing of the species is not warranted. F&G should have a draft report published this November that will provide information helpful to this reexamination.

\* \* \*

### **House Environment, Energy and Technology Committee, March 4, 2008**

On Tuesday, the House Environment, Energy and Technology Committee considered H586, a revised version of the vehicle emissions testing bill. This set up a statewide

program to help areas whose air quality could be on the brink of being label non-attainment by the EPA. The first area in which it could be used is the Treasure Valley. The co-sponsors of the bill, Rep. Mark Snodgrass (R-Meridian) and Senator David Langhorst (D-Boise) have revised this legislation numerous times after discussion with the committee members and others who had concerns.

After testimony by the Administrator of the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Toni Hardesty, explaining the need for a program such as this and explaining the changes that had been made in recent weeks, ICIE and IACI testified in support while two gentlemen from Canyon County spent over an hour disputing the data and the need for the legislation.

Before a vote on a motion to send the bill to the floor with a do-pass recommendation, the committee debated a substitute motion which would be have sent the bill to the amending order to add an exemption for logging equipment to the ag equipment exemption already mentioned in the legislation. After several committee members mentioned the many opportunities the sponsors had allowed to make such changes, the substitute motion failed. The committee then voted 11-4 to move the bill forward with a do-pass recommendation.

That is the first half of the process. If the House approves the bill, it must go through the Senate successfully before being sent to the Governor for a signature.

\* \* \*

### **House Revenue and Taxation Committee, March 4, 2008**

A state program to grant tax credits for conservation easements that was proposed last year by a diverse group that included farmers, ranchers, loggers and environmentalists was stalled this year by the House Revenue and Taxation Committee. Last year's legislation had been withdrawn in order to the educate legislators on the purpose of the bill and to revise it. Some lawmakers continued to be concerned for a variety of reasons. A proposal was made to put time limits on the conservation easements of 5 to 50 years rather than the 30 years into perpetuity, that had been negotiated among the supporters in hopes of gathering enough votes this year.

Such a change caused the members to the coalition to withdraw the legislation rather than have it sent to the amending order in the House.

\* \* \*

### **Update on the statewide comprehensive aquifer study**

The Joint Finances and Appropriations Committee approved \$20 million to fund a 10-year plan for an in-depth study and development of a comprehensive aquifer management plan. The \$20 million would be used to monitor the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer and

update the model and to complete studies on the Treasure Valley, Rathdrum Prairie, Big Wood, Moscow-Pullman, Mountain Home and Bear River aquifers.

The House of Representatives has already approved the bill and it now goes to the Senate floor.

\* \* \*

### **Update on H557, the Crop Residue Disposal bill**

After expedited handling by both the Idaho House and Senate, the Governor signed this legislation on Friday. The bill was a mediated solution that will satisfy Safe Air for Everyone (SAFE) and the growers. SAFE brought the original lawsuit to ban field burning, which was upheld by the 9th Circuit of Appeals. Growers were not allowed to use burning to dispose of crop residue. The passage of this legislation and signature by the Governor allows the Board of Environmental Quality to approve the rules to implement the legislation. The last step will be review by EPA. If EPA approves, farmers will be able to burn this fall following strict guidelines that will be administered by the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality.

#####

From the Idaho Council on Industry & the Environment (ICIE), *a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to facilitate the use of sound science and facts in shaping public policy on environmental issues.*

Patricia Barclay  
Idaho Council on Industry and the Environment  
P.O. Box 255  
Boise, ID 83701  
Phone: 208-336-8508 \* Fax: 208-336-8663  
[patbarclay@icie.org](mailto:patbarclay@icie.org)