



CAPITOL REVIEW

A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

AMG : RICK WAITLEY | ROGER BATT | BENJAMIN KELLY | PATXI LARROCEA-PHILLIPS
55 SW 5TH AVENUE, SUITE 100 MERIDIAN, ID 83642 PH: 208-888-0988 FX: 208-888-4586

A Weekly Legislative Report

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WHAT IS CAPITOL REVIEW?

You are receiving Capitol Review, a publication produced **each Friday** during the Idaho Legislature, as a board member of a client served by Association Management Group. Lobbyists **Rick Waitley, Roger Batt, Benjamin Kelly and Patxi Larrocea-Phillips** are working to keep you informed about legislative issues facing the 2020 Idaho Legislature. If you have questions on issues or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact our office. Association Management Group will be representing the following clients during the 2020 legislature:

Rick Waitley/Benjamin Kelly/Patxi Larrocea-Phillips:

- Food Producers of Idaho
- Idaho Alfalfa & Clover Seed Growers Association
- Idaho Hay and Forage Association
- Idaho Honey Industry Association
- Idaho Onion Growers' Association
- Idaho Noxious Weed Control Association
- Nezperce Prairie Grass Growers Association
- Northwest Agricultural Cooperative Council
- Northwest Farm Credit Services

Roger Batt:

- Idaho Eastern Oregon Seed Association
- Idaho Grape Growers and Wine Commission
- Idaho Heartland Coalition
- Idaho Mint Growers Association
- Treasure Valley Water Users Association
- Western Equipment Dealers Association

NEW LEGISLATORS

During the interim there were two new legislators appointed to fill vacancies. **Megan Kiska** was appointed to fill the void left by Representative Tom Dayley when he took a position with the Farm Service Agency. Megan is inspector general and real property officer for the 124th Fighter Wing in the Idaho Air National Guard, where she is a captain, and is a graduate of California State University, Hayward. She has also served as a Republican precinct committeeman. Minority Leader Mat Erpelding also resigned from the legislature in late 2019 for a position with the Boise Metro Chamber of Commerce. His position in District 19 was filled by the

appointment of **Lauren Necochea**. Lauren directs the **Idaho Center for Fiscal Policy and Idaho Voices for Children**. Representative Ilana Rubel was selected to fill the void left by Representative Erpelding as Minority Leader in the House of Representatives.

STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

Governor Little gave his second **State of the State address on Monday, January 6, to kick off the 2nd Session of the 65th Legislature**. In attendance were legislators, Idaho Supreme Court Justices, constitutional officers and members of the public. **Governor Little emphasized the issues of education, healthcare, infrastructure and government deregulation.**

During his State of the State address Governor Little emphasized the need to have a clear and user friendly administrative code and a cleaning of Idaho's outdated statutes. **The Governor plans to bring 30 pieces of legislation that would repeal outdated laws such as trespassing hogs.** He would continue to prioritize education in his budget and plans to invest more in teacher pay due to the retention rate we are seeing in educators around the state. Literacy rates are also of concern and Governor Little outlined ways to provide opportunities to keep Idaho's kids on track. Also, growth is continuing to push the bounds of infrastructure according to the Governor. He plans to divert \$100 million in funds to be used for the maintenance and improvement of Idaho's highway systems.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

During Governor Little's State of the State address he emphasized the need to prepare for harder times while the good times are upon us now. The Economic Outlook and Revenue Assessment Committee met prior to the beginning of the legislature to discuss the potential outlook of the state during the coming year. The Governor's Division of Financial Management doesn't think there will be a recession in the next year or two. However, the division did note pessimistic outlooks forecast about a 35% probability of a national recession over the next couple of years. The economic forecasts are important because they play a role in shaping the state budget. And because education is Idaho's largest budget expense each year, any revenue changes may

affect the pool of money available for public schools and higher education.

Idaho net farm income is projected to jump 50% from 2018 to 2019, to a record-high \$2.7 billion, helped by some higher commodity prices and lower expenses. **University of Idaho agricultural economist Garth Taylor noted that 2020 prospects are mostly good for the sector**, which is a big contributor to the state's economy. Barley, potatoes and sugar beets posted the biggest year-to-year gains in crop receipts, offsetting modest declines in hay and wheat, UI reported. Except for beets, crop revenue is recorded on a calendar-year basis and includes parts of recent and previous growing seasons. Expenses in the past year increased for labor but dropped for fertilizer, chemicals, fuel, and loan interest, UI reported.

ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

The Red Tape Reduction Act was an executive order issued by Governor Little that required state agencies that have authority to issue administrative rules to identify at least two existing rules to be repealed or significantly simplified for every one rule they propose. Idaho's administrative code includes 736 chapters and 8,278 pages of regulations and at least 72,000 total restrictions. The three most regulated areas in Idaho are economic development with 3,018 pages of regulations, natural resources with 1,815 pages of regulations, and health and human services with 1,666 pages of regulations.

During the 2019 Legislative Session lawmakers **did not pass an omnibus bill** that would have approved the rules as of July 1, 2019. During the 2020 legislative session the legislature is tasked with reviewing all of the administrative rules. There is speculation as to what would happen if a committee objects to a rule or package of rules. It could potentially wipe those rules off of the books for the following year. As the legislature ramps up we will have more concrete details on how committees will deal with administrative rules and the process for any rule rejections.

BSU TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Idaho's transportation infrastructure continues to be a challenge to keep up with the population growth in Idaho. BSU has been asked to complete a study that will be presented to the Governor and specific legislative committee. The study was built around three basic questions:

- 1) What is the state of transportation infrastructure in Idaho?
- 2) What has changed since the Governor's task force report?
- 3) What policy alternatives are available to improve transportation infrastructure in Idaho?

The project was launched in September 2019 and will be completed in June 2020. The goal is to have the revenue model developed by March with a final presentation by summer at the IACI annual meeting.

Note: If you have questions about the report or would like a copy of the report when it is completed contact:

Vanessa Crossgrove Fry
Research Director, [Idaho Policy Institute](#)
Assistant Research Professor, [School of Public Service](#)
Boise State University
p 208.426.2848
vanessafry@boisestate.edu

DRIVING PRIVILEGE CARD

Senator Jim Guthrie will be introducing legislation that addresses issuing driver's licenses to individuals from a foreign country and that are not lawfully present in the US to qualify for a driving privilege card. This legislation is coming out of Eastern Idaho where driving on Idaho roads has been difficult for foreign born agriculture employees and students involved in high school sports and FFA activities. Currently 7 of 13 Western States offer this privilege (including WA, NV and UT). The license has limitations and would not allow the person to vote or purchase firearms.

HANDHELD DEVICE BAN

House Transportation Chairman Joe Palmer, Meridian, introduced legislation that would overturn all city bans in Idaho on handheld devices while driving. Several cities including Meridian, enacted their bans July 1 and reasoned that the chief cause of a number of accidents were occurring due to handheld devices. Rep. Palmer's effort would be to unify all cities and municipalities in the state so that citizens are not out of compliance in some areas while breaking the law in others. **H308 would enact a new statewide distracted-driving law** that would allow police to cite dangerous or distracted drivers, whether they're talking on the phone, eating or any activities deemed to be causing erratic driving. Palmer's bill would allow police to determine if a driver is distracted by an activity unrelated to driving that interferes with the safe operation of the vehicle to issue the driver a citation.

A second proposal is expected to come forward from Senator Chuck Winder, Boise, which would specifically ban handheld device use and require hands-free devices whenever Idaho drivers talk on cell phones while driving. The proposal would follow failed legislation last year in the Senate that would have done the same thing. With local jurisdictions beginning to enact different laws, both efforts would provide consistency for citizens. Rep. Palmer's proposal would provide discretion for law enforcement and allow a largely rural state, to travel unhindered as long as people are paying attention and driving safely.

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