



CAPITOL REVIEW

A WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE REPORT

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A Weekly Legislative Report

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WA FUEL TAX

HJM5 was introduced and passed the House with no votes against the bill. This joint memorial that will need to be voted on by the full Senate, is a message to the Governor of Washington opposing a proposed Washington law that would impose a tax on fuel exported by Washington to Idaho. Both Idaho and Alaska have threatened retaliation or retaliated with legislation for the tax and Oregon Gov. Kate Brown called on Washington Gov. Jay Inslee to veto the bill. **A top Democrat in the Washington Legislature is now pulling support** of a proposed tax on fuel exported from the state's five refineries that has been criticized by neighboring states. Rep. Jake Fey, D-Tacoma, one of the architects of a proposed \$16.8 billion transportation funding measure, said Saturday he no longer backed the bill. Democrats had proposed a **6 cent per gallon tax on fuel exported from the state**. Nearly 40% of the fuel processed in Washington refineries goes to other states. Governor Little and AG Lawrence Wasden sent a letter to Washington Governor Jay Inslee asking him to stop the added fuel tax on Idahoans. The letter asked Inslee to consider how the tax would impact Idahoans already struggling with inflation and rising fuel costs.

LEADERSHIP IDAHO AGRICULTURE, CLASS 42

This was an exciting week for Leadership Idaho Agriculture. LIA Class 42 was in Boise spending a large amount of time learning about the public policy process. **The four-week session culminated on Friday at Graduation**. Since it began in the mid 1980's, LIA has graduated 1070 students from the program. politics and serve in areas of public service.

U OF I PARMA R&E

The University of Idaho is getting closer to building a new agricultural research center in Southwest Idaho. The Idaho State Board of Education approved a request from UI on Thursday to move its **Idaho Center for Plant and Soil Health facility from the design phase to the construction phase**. The renovation at UI's Parma Research and Extension Center will cost more than \$9 million and include

updated laboratories, student housing and new greenhouses. While the original budget for the project, set during the planning phase, was \$7 million, the cost is now estimated at \$9.5 million. **The rising costs are because of challenges with water and sewer connectivity** and the long distance to reach the sanitation and wastewater lines at the city. UI is working with its federal relations team to apply for about \$2.5 million in federal grants through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

A WEEK OF RECOGNITION

Last week during the Idaho Ag Summit, five individuals were recognized for the Excellence in Agriculture awards presented by ISDA Director Celia Gould, on behalf of Governor Little. Those honored this year include:

Mark & Wendy Pratt, Education/Advocacy: Mark and Wendy Pratt operate a family cow-calf operation located outside of Blackfoot. Over the years, both Mark and Wendy have been driven to continue and improve the sustainability of their operation. They have always been concerned about grazing management, handling their cattle with the least amount of stress, and making their operation profitable and sustainable for future generations. Both are active in a number of leadership roles in their community and state.

Russ Zenner, Environmental Stewardship: Russ Zenner has been farming in the Palouse Region of Idaho in Genesee for more than forty years. Some management responsibilities, becoming the fourth generation to carry on the farming tradition of the Zenner family in Idaho. Russ has spent his entire farming career trying to improve the farming methods used on the Palouse. The rolling hills have been seriously degraded and eroded from years of intensive tillage, short rotations, and poor management of residues. A tireless advocate for the environmental benefits of seeding directly into standing stubble and minimal soil disturbance. Russ pioneered diversity in rotations extending typical 2-

year wheat/pea rotations to include spring cereals, pulses, and oilseeds. He still plays a key role in moving research forward and continues to stay connected to many important projects.

Tom Iverson, *Marketing Innovation:* Tom Iverson is a farmer, in Bonners Ferry, where he and his son, Ty, run T&T Farms growing wheat, barley, canola, and hay. In his years farming, Tom has nearly doubled the size of the family farm and expanded the operation to include more diverse crops and custom farming. A firm believer in responsible stewardship, he was one of the first in the area to adopt conservation practices on the farm. During Tom's time in the Idaho Wheat Growers leadership, it was Tom's guidance that led the way for the creation of the Idaho Barley Commission. It was also his leadership that resulted in the Idaho Wheat Growers Association changing its name to the Idaho Grain Producers Association, enabling it to better represent both wheat and barley growers. Tom was also instrumental in the establishment of National Barley Growers Association.

Gary Fornshell, *Technical Innovation:* Gary Fornshell has been involved in aquaculture education his entire professional career, and specifically for the past 28 years, as the U of I Aquaculture Extension Specialist. Gary has represented the aquaculture industry as a credible voice before EPS, IDEQ, and media and consumers. Gary has developed nutrition-related programs for professionals and consumers and targeted training sessions on disease, nutrition and production methodology specifically for Idaho fish farmers and their staff as well as provided current information on developing topics in a timely manner. His involvement in Western Regional Aquaculture Center was instrumental in translating USDA-funded research on trout, salmon, burbot, tilapia and catfish into language that could be understood and directly utilized by Idaho fish farmers.

Bob Naerebout, *Lifetime Achievement:* Bob Naerebout has spent his entire career advocating for the dairy industry in different capacities. Bob served as the Executive Director of the Idaho Dairymen's Association, Inc. (IDA) which represents all dairy producers of Idaho. In this capacity, Bob represented dairy farmer interests in public policy and regulatory discussions, navigated through challenging legal situations and created an innovative agricultural association which earned him renowned credibility locally, regionally and nationally. Bob has worked on and successfully passed countless pieces of legislation during his time with IDA. He has forged strong and meaningful relationships with policy makers, regulatory agencies, ag associations, economic development organizations, employment

and labor advocates, and health care champions, Bob is a well-respected member of communities throughout Idaho as they relate to agriculture and the environment.

HONORARY DOCTORATE

In case you missed it, **Rick Waitley was awarded an Honorary Doctorate Degree in Agricultural Sciences from the University of Idaho.** The U of I awards honorary degrees to individuals deserving of honor by virtue of scholarly distinction, noteworthy public service or significant contributions to Idaho. Rick received this degree during the 2021 University of Idaho winter commencement ceremony, in Moscow. Dean Parrella provided the following remarks and we added them to Capitol Review without asking Rick.

Rick has been a tremendous partner to the University of Idaho and particularly to the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Rick is a 1973 graduate, having received his degree in agriculture education. While he taught in his years following graduation, he went on from there to continue his career working with National FFA and ultimately moved to a career in lobbying. Currently, Rick serves as the president of Association Management Group, where he works with many agricultural organizations, advocating for agriculture in our state. In 1992, Rick became the Executive Director of Leadership Idaho Agriculture (LIA). LIA is a premier leadership development program that works to cultivate leaders in agriculture – working to build advocates for agriculture and rural communities. Many of the program's graduates have gone on to serve as legislators or commissioners for agricultural organizations.

Rick serves on numerous community and state boards and committees and currently holds the chair position for the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences Dean's Advisory Board. In this role he helps shape the vision for the college. His dedication to higher education is inspiring. As Governor Brad Little stated in a letter of support for this nomination, **"I have worked with Rick for years. His advocacy work for policies that advanced the agricultural industry and his commitment to agricultural education have helped propel the state forward."** Additionally, a joint letter from Idaho's four congressional delegates states, "Mr. Waitley's commitment to educating Idaho's agriculture industry has made profound and enduring contributions that have shaped the landscape of Idaho's agriculture community."

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