

# GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS UPDATE



February 6, 2026

## Idaho State Updates

On Monday, January 12, 2026, the Second Regular Session of the 68th Idaho Legislature convened. Legislation is being introduced quickly, with 111 bills currently presented in the House and 40 in the Senate.

### New Legislation to Watch

Below are the newly introduced or anticipated bills that the Idaho Dairymen's Association (IDA) is monitoring so far this legislative session. Click on the hyperlink to view the full text of each bill on the Idaho Legislature website.

**H526 - Cottage food operations, TCS foods:** This legislation removes barriers for entrepreneurs starting a food business. The requirements for a new business to sell any time / temperature controlled foods are significant. This legislation allows small sellers (under \$5,000 annually) to be able to get a start in selling these types of foods. The bill sponsor confirmed that existing rules continue to require a label on the TSC foods to make the consumer aware the food was prepared in a home kitchen, not subject to regulation by the state, and may contain allergens. **IDA - NEUTRAL**

**H584 - Workers, lawful status:** This legislation adds to Idaho employment law to prohibit employment of illegal aliens and require employers to e-verify an employee's legal employment status as a condition of employment. **IDA - OPPOSE**

**S1247 - Idaho e-verify act:** This legislation creates the Idaho E-verify Act, requiring all public agencies, at state and local levels of government, to implement use of the federal e-verify program for the hiring of new employees. Private employers that do business with state and local government, if they have 150 or more employees and contracts valued at \$100,000 or more, would also have to use the federal e-verify program for hiring of their new employees. Enforcement mechanisms are included to create incentives for compliance. **IDA - MONITORING**

### Bill Analysis Highlights

#### **H509 - Vehicle inspections:**

- The bill provides relief to the processors whose trucks must stop at ports of entry. This bill would increase the productivity of processors trucks and will reduce the time spent at ports of entry, especially for local trucks that may pass through multiple ports of entry in a single day.
- Improving the efficiency of milk transport will reduce costs for processors and improve service to dairies.
- Benefits to agriculture include improved transportation times for shipments of other agricultural products such as feed, bedding straw, inputs, and animals.

### H526 - Cottage food operations, TCS foods:

- Allowing food products on the consumer market without adherence to consumer safety measures increases the risk of foodborne illness and human harm, which in turn could degrade consumer confidence in the food industry as a whole.
- IDA has worked with the bill sponsor to reaffirm any dairy product that would be categorized as cottage food – must require a label making the consumer aware it was prepared in a home kitchen exempt from sanitation regulations and may contain allergens.

### H584 - Workers, lawful status:

- H584 is incompatible with conservative principles of limited government and minimal regulatory burden on private enterprise.
- This bill imposes burdens on industry not shared by industry throughout the nation, and imposes burdens on industries that have no access to alien guestworkers.
- H584 also weaponizes the Attorney General to initiate investigations simply based on a citizen suggestion, without any penalty or recourse against the citizen where false or harassing accusations are made.

### S1224- Slow moving vehicles:

- S1224 protects equipment operators from being ticketed for obstructing the highway when there is not an appropriate place to pull off.
- This bill will allow for safer, more efficient movement of farm equipment when it requires moving along a highway by changing the requirement to pull off only when safe and appropriate conditions exist. Additionally, this bill protects and affirms farmers' rights to use the road.

## **Anti-Immigration Press Conference**

On February 3, a group of legislators, including members of the Gang of Eight and the Idaho Freedom Caucus, hosted a press conference to roll out a package of anti-immigration bills. These proposals had previously been outlined as concepts on IdahoImmigrationWatch.org, a website that promotes these policies and publicly targets legislators it claims accept campaign funding from so-called “Big Ag and Cheap Labor” organization, including the Idaho Dairy Industry PAC and Farm Bureau. The site and its supporters openly oppose Idaho agriculture.

Legislators standing in front of the room at the press event included Cornel Rasor (R-Sagle), Phil Hart (R-Kellogg), Heather Scott (R-Blanchard), Dale Hawkins (R-Fernwood), Joe Alfieri (R-Coeur d’Alene), Elaine Price (R-Coeur d’Alene), Kyle Harris (R-Lewiston), Tammy Nichols (R-Middleton), Brian Lenney (R-Nampa), Steve Tanner (R-Nampa), and Kent Marmon (R-Caldwell). Magic Valley legislators in attendance included Glenneda Zuiderveld (R-Twin Falls), Clint Hostetler (R-Twin Falls), Josh Kohl (R-Twin Falls), and David Leavitt (R-Twin Falls).

During the event, Dale Hawkins placed a spotlight on the dairy industry, alleging that “70% of employees would fail an I-9 audit,” putting Idaho dairies directly in the crosshairs. This legislative package is designed to specifically target your workforce.

The Magic Valley is the heart of Idaho agriculture, making the attendance of Senators Zuiderveld and Kohl and Representative Hostetler and Leavitt especially concerning for dairymen. They consistently oppose agriculture and, rather than working with industry to find solutions, take positions that directly harm Idaho producers.

### Advocacy Efforts

Last week, Rick Naerebout went on a media tour with Congressman Mike Simpson and Zak Miller, CEO of Idaho Farm Bureau Federation. The purpose was to highlight the need of securing a legal workforce for agriculture. The interviews sparked productive discussion with Idahoans on real, workable solutions that support farmers, workers, and rural communities. The tour included two radio shows, a townhall style event, and a popular podcast. Thank you to Congressman Mike Simpson for his continued leadership on agriculture workforce issues and for elevating the importance of a legal, stable workforce for Idaho agriculture.



As always, if you have questions about the proposed legislation or would like to connect with your legislators to express your concerns or show support, please contact IDA. We are here to support you.

Thank you,

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## Status of Legislation

The following is a current report and update of all legislation monitored by IDA. Click on the hyperlinks to be directed to the Legislative website to read the legislation.

Bill #	IDA Position	House	Senate	Final
<a href="#">H0509 – Vehicle inspections</a>	Support	Transportation & Defense		
<a href="#">H526 - Cottage food operations</a>	Neutral	2nd Reading		
<a href="#">H584 - Workers, lawful status</a>	Oppose	Business		
<a href="#">S1224 – Slow moving vehicles</a>	Support		Transportation	
<a href="#">S1247 – Idaho e-verify act</a>	Monitor		State Affairs	