

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS UPDATE



February 16, 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 183 bills currently presented in the House and 77 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.

[H667 – Motor Vehicles](#): This legislation would eliminate the requirement to have the Idaho Department of Transportation issue non-domicile CDL's. The IDA staff are working with the bill sponsor and Idaho Department of Transportation to better understand the potential impacts of the legislation.

[S1283 – Direct to consumer foods](#): IDA worked with bill sponsor to ensure that any dairy product under this statute would still be required to comply with sanitation, labeling, and other safety standards all dairy producers currently do. **IDA - NEUTRAL**

E-Verify Bills

Two E-Verify bills continue to make their way through the chambers. S1247 passed the Senate State Affairs Committee on a 6-3 vote and will likely receive a vote this week on the Senate floor. H584 was printed in the House Business Committee by Representative Jordan Redman. A new bill was introduced on Friday by Rep. Redman that is similar to H584, but removes the exemption for casual and domestic labor, such as a nanny or housekeeper. IDA will continue to oppose concepts like H584 that create a substantial burden on employers, specifically in essential industries like agriculture.

Other Immigration Bills

As was reported in the last newsletter, a group of Idaho legislators has joined forces with a new special interest group called Secure Idaho (IdahoImmigrationWatch.org). The group has begun introducing a series of bills targeted at immigrants, refugees, and migrant workers. Some of the bills below have already been introduced, while other concepts are planned to be introduced in the coming weeks.

- H592 – Would require hospitals to report immigration status data to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare. Hospitals oppose this legislation because it would add significant reporting costs to electronic health records.
- H656 – Would require schools to report immigration status to the Idaho Department of

Education. This is being opposed by education stakeholders.

- H659 – Would require local jurisdictions to enroll in partnerships with ICE for the purposes of enforcing federal immigration laws. IDA is opposed to this legislation as it revisits successful efforts to pass H83a from last legislative session which was signed into law by the Governor. H83a gives local jurisdictions that option to partner with ICE but does not require them.
- H660 – would require law enforcement to maintain records and reports of the immigration status of those they arrest.
- S1260 – This legislation would clarify sections of code related to H83a that IDA supported and was signed into law last year.

Other bills the group has expressed interest in running include:

- Legislation that would create an increased crime for employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers.
- Legislation requiring an audit of the Idaho refugee program.
- Legislation making it a crime for knowingly harboring or aiding an undocumented immigrant. Similar legislation was introduced last session (H335) and died in committee.

Economic Impacts of Undocumented Labor Press Conference

On Friday, February 13, Rick Naerebout joined industry leaders, including Zak Miller with Idaho Farm Bureau Federation, Tommy Ahlquist with Ahlquist, and Steve Martinez with Idaho Home Builders, to present the findings of an economic report that details what would happen in Idaho if the state were to lose undocumented labor. The findings are grim and are meant to inform legislators what is at stake as they consider state level immigration enforcement bills. During the press conference, Rick had the opportunity to address the ridiculous accusations that employing foreign born workers is akin to slave labor. The speakers did a great job addressing the challenges employers face, and the solutions each industry desires. You can read more about the report and the essential role foreign born labor plays in Idaho at Idaho Alliance for a Legal Workforce.

Magic Valley Legislators Vote No on Water

The Magic Valley would not be what it is today without a vital resource, water. SCR118 was introduced with the purpose of formally recognize the vital economic and hydrologic contributions of Idaho Water Resource Board District 3, encompassing the Magic Valley and Wood River Basins. Senators Zuiderveld and Kohl opposed SCR118 which supports water infrastructure, specifically essential projects that support the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer. The Senators expressed concerns with cloud seeding which IDWR has said added hundreds of thousands of acre feet to Eastern Snake Plain system annually. IDA appreciates the leadership of Senator Kelly Anthon and Representative Doug Pickett for advancing this important legislation to direct critical funding to water projects that support agriculture in the Magic Valley.

State Budget Update

The focus this legislative session continues to be on the budget and how to balance the state ledger with the reduced revenue from tax cuts, both federal and state. The Governor proposed a 3% reduction and legislators have added an additional 2% spending reduction on top of that. The main areas IDA is monitoring is how the budget will impact ISDA and their ability to prevent

quagga mussel eradication, UI CALS research funding, water infrastructure, and other potential cuts that could disrupt essential services to dairymen across the state. Budget setting is just beginning so stay tuned for more updates. You can read more about the budget state of play from the Idaho Capital Sun: Idaho Legislature's budget committee passes maintenance budgets with new 5% cuts included • Idaho Capital Sun

Betty's Bill Introduced!

On Wednesday, legislation was introduced to create an official state sport for Idaho – hunting! This bill comes from Hank Hafliger's nine-year-old granddaughter Betty Grandy who pursued the idea after she pitched Governor Little on the idea and he encouraged her to run legislation. The bill is H652 and is carried by Representatives Don Hall and Grayson Stone. Thank you to these legislators and their efforts so far. Next up – a full hearing!

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
H0509 - Vehicle inspections	Support	Transportation & Defense		
H526 - Cottage food operations	Neutral	Passed 67-2-1		
H584 - Workers, lawful status	Oppose	Business		
H652 - Hunting, state sport	Support	Resources & Conservation		
H662 - Milk and cream testing	Support	Printing		
H667 - Motor Vehicles	Monitor	Printing		
S1224 - Slow moving vehicles	Support		Transportation	
S1247 - Idaho e-verify act	Monitor		3rd Reading	
S1283 - Direct to consumer foods	Neutral	Printing		
SCR117 - Water district 4	Support	Resources & Conservation	Adopted - voice vote	
SCR118 - Water district 3	Support	Resources & Conservation	Adopted 31-3-1	
SCR119 - Water district 2	Support	Resources & Conservation	Adopted - voice vote	