

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS UPDATE



January 23, 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 31 bills currently presented in the House and 7 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.

HO509 - Vehicle inspections: This legislation stipulates that any vehicle subject to inspection will not be subject to re-inspection for 72 hours. This allows local truck traffic to operate for 72 hours between inspections and not be subject to multiple inspections on the same day. This balance between need for safety and trucks being able to operate in a productive manner.

S1224 – Slow moving vehicles: This legislation clarifies operators of slow-moving vehicles, construction equipment, and farm equipment need to turn off the road only when a safe or size appropriate exit location becomes available.

Milk Testing Legislation: This bill has not been introduced yet. This legislation would authorize the Idaho State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) to regulate labs testing milk quality (SPC, etc.) and other analytes that impact producer pricing. Currently ISDA only has the authority to regulate labs for component and SCC testing. If passed, this bill would move into rulemaking to determine final implementation details. IDA and the Intermountain Milk Processors Association, formerly Idaho Milk Processors Association, have agreed upon the bill language. Representative John VanderWoude (District 22) has agreed to cosponsor the bill, and we are working with the Legislative Services Office to draft the bill.

Immigration and Workforce

IDA anticipates and is preparing for immigration legislation that could negatively impact the dairy industry's workforce. [Idaho Immigration Watch](#) recently released a list of upcoming 2026 bills in the works. These include local law enforcement involvement in immigration enforcement; penalties for churches and businesses that knowingly assist undocumented immigrants; requirements for public schools to track and report students' legal status; mandatory E-Verify; and additional related proposals.

Building off last session's efforts, IDA has continued organizing and meeting with the Idaho Workforce and Immigration Coalition. This is a coalition of Idaho business groups to advocate for preservation of existing labor while seeking new labor opportunities through immigration reform. Participating industries include construction, hospitality, restaurants, and agriculture.

This week, the House State Affairs Committee heard RS32866, a proposal to eliminate the Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs. This RS failed on a 7-7 vote, which means the proposal was not allowed to be introduced as a bill. A committee vote to not print an RS (or proposed bill) is a rare rebuke. We anticipate an attempt to revise the proposal and seek reintroduction. As the session continues, we will keep you informed on any legislation that could impact your workforce and our efforts to reduce the negative impacts.

Other Updates

During Governor Little's State of the State address, the state budget was top of mind. He emphasized a fiscally conservative approach and the importance of living within the state's means. The Governor highlighted his commitment to avoiding cuts to K-12 public education, law enforcement, and water infrastructure. In response, the newly named J-FAC co-chair, Representative Josh Tanner (District 14), publicly criticized the budget, calling it a "gimmick." The differences of opinion on how to balance the state budget will play it out in real time during the JFAC process.

Another item to keep an eye on will be how the state conforms with the new tax provisions in the One Big Beautiful Bill that President Trump signed into law in 2025. For more information related to tax conformity, [check out the latest from the Idaho Capital Sun](#).

Dairymen at the Capitol

Recently, there have been a lot of dairymen taking an active role in engaging with our elected officials. IDA board members—Pete Wiersma, President and Ted Vander Schaaf, Treasurer—joined IDA staff in attending the Governor's Dinner on Saturday January 10th. Ryan Holm with Darigold and Russ DeKruyf with Glanbia were also present. Our table also had the pleasure of hosting ISDA Director Chanel Tewalt and former Idaho Department of Corrections Director Josh Tewalt.

Idaho Ag Day at the Capitol was on January 13th. The dairy industry was represented by IDA and Dairy West serving cheese and milk to guests that visited the rotunda to learn more about our state's agriculture sector. Hank Hafliger was present and split his time between our dairy booth and the Idaho Beef Council booth, as he serves as one of IDA's dairy representative on the Idaho Beef Council. Rick Naerebout also gave a [media interview](#) with KTVB highlighting IDA's priorities this legislative session.



On January 14th, the IDA board also attended the Ag All-Star Award Ceremony hosted by Food Producers of Idaho. This event recognized [30 Representatives and 19 Senators](#) for their support of Idaho agriculture during the 2025 Legislative Session. Award recipients have demonstrated a strong record of supporting agriculture through their votes, aligning with Food Producers 90% or more of the time. IDA was proud to sponsor the event, and board members valued the opportunity to engage directly with legislators.

And finally, Hank Hafliger's granddaughter, Betty, had a very special meeting with Governor Little last week. Betty shared her idea that Idaho should have an official state sport—and she came prepared with a recommendation: hunting. The Governor is supportive of Betty's idea and enthusiasm, and the two even discussed what the next steps could look like to help make it a reality.



Looking Ahead

The 2026 Legislative Session is shaping up to be a critical time for Idaho's dairy industry. IDA remains committed to advocating for balanced legislation that protects Idaho communities and the industry. Direct interaction between dairymen and their elected officials can significantly influence how legislation impacts production agriculture. 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
HO509 – Vehicle inspections		Transportation & Defense		
S1224 – Slow moving vehicles			Transportation	