



Idaho Association of  
Commerce & Industry  
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## Legislative Report — January 22, 2010 • Week 2

Friday, January 22, 2010

### NEWS TO USE — State Vaccine Funding Plan Offered

The IACI Legislative Committee met on Tuesday and was joined by Senator Dean Cameron. The highlighted issue was regarding vaccines and creating a new and stable funding source to cover the cost of vaccines for children in Idaho. The prior funding has been eliminated from the state's General Fund, and the program stops at the end of this month. Senator Cameron and members of a task force that included a number of insurance and health care providers have developed draft legislation designed to create a pool of money that would result in a significant decrease in the cost of vaccines purchased by health care providers in the state. The legislation is designed to reduce the overall cost not only to children covered by state and federal programs, but also those covered by private insurance, including ERISA programs.

IACI members discussed the measure at length and recommended several changes to the legislation. It was ultimately decided that members needed another week to consider the implications of the legislation on the policies they provide to their employees. It is largely believed that the legislation will result in a savings. The measure will be back before the IACI Legislative Committee next Tuesday for action.

### Legislative Committee Meetings Begin

**IACI Legislative Committee** weekly meetings have begun! This Committee is open to all members every **Tuesday at 10:00 a.m.** at our new office conference room at 816 West Bannock Street, Suite 5B. Agenda and relevant meeting documents are sent on Mondays the day before each meeting. We encourage you to participate in person or by phone!

### Mark Your Calendars!

**IACI Open House Lunch with Legislators set for Thursday, February 4, at Noon. Please join us at the new office!**

### IACI on the Cutting Edge of PAC Election Support

On Thursday, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a 20-year-old spending limit on corporations in federal elections. On a 5-4 vote, the Court decided to restore the first amendment rights to corporations and unions, allowing them to participate in federal elections. While corporations still can't give money directly to candidates out of their general treasuries, they can now run ads directly advocating the election of a federal candidate at any time in the election cycle using money out of their general funds.

On an interesting side note, while this court ruling is regarding federal candidates, this is the exact model the Idaho Prosperity Fund (IACI's PAC) currently uses in all of its election activity in Idaho. The Prosperity Fund does independent expenditures on behalf of candidates who generally share the same business philosophy as IACI and who need help in elections. In the 2008 general election, all of the candidates who were financially supported by the Idaho Prosperity Fund were successful in their elections.

### NPDES Primacy

The IACI Environment Committee discussed recent reports that the Association of Idaho Cities would be pressing for an updated plan for Idaho to take on NPDES Primacy. While it is clearly understood that there are no financial resources available this year to take on primacy, reports are that they plan to ask the Legislature to direct the DEQ to update their information about the requirements to take on the challenge.

Previous plans included paying for the program by assessing fees on the private sector for about 1/3 of the amount, while the state general fund would take on 1/3 and the federal government would pay for 1/3. Serious questions still remain about the viability of such a program, where new fees would be assessed on operations that do not currently have to pay for a permit. Additionally, there is a question as to whether it would be worthwhile if the EPA retains most of the control of the program, as concerns have been witnessed in other states that already have primacy.

### Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan — Funding Implementation

IACI's Environment Committee heard yesterday from Rep. Bert Stevenson, Chair of House Resources & Conservation Committee. He talked about a number of issues, but focused on the work being completed on the Eastern Snake Plain Aquifer with the Comprehensive Aquifer Management Plan (CAMP). He believed legislation would soon be coming out to implement the financing portion of the plan. The legislation will likely utilize a hybrid of processes within water districts and county offices to assess the fee at the rate of \$1 per acre foot for surface water and \$2 per acre foot for ground water. There are other allocations outlined for spring users, power interests, municipalities and industrial customers. He strongly encouraged all of the members to stay at the table and to finish the negotiations for the legislation. He said that good progress had been made.

The Rathdrum Prairie CAMP is underway as well. Planning for management of the aquifer will require a different set of priorities, but consensus is being sought among the various parties. Another interesting development is the possibility of future planning for the Treasure Valley aquifer. While everyone understands that water is a finite resource in most of the Great Basin desert, it was inevitable that water conflicts would emerge in the most populated center of Idaho as it has in most other large western population centers. IACI will continue to work and encourage members to stay at the

table and negotiate a workable agreement to ensure future business development has the water resources it needs to expand the economy.

## Special Election Result in Massachusetts

A major event on the federal level that will affect many of the issues on which IACI is currently working is the result of Tuesday's special election in Massachusetts to fill the seat of the late Senator Edward Kennedy. State Senator Scott Brown won the election, defeating Martha Coakley, the current Attorney General for the Commonwealth. This election has very broad implications, as Senator-elect Brown marks the all-important 41<sup>st</sup> vote for Republicans — the number of Senators it requires to maintain a filibuster. This change already has many questioning what will happen with the healthcare legislation that is still being debated in Congress, as well the climate change bill that has still not been voted on by the Senate. President Obama has now suggested that a scaled-back health care bill might be an option that could still be passed.

IACI plans to invite representatives from the Cities organization to update the Environment Committee on the issue. All members will receive notice of the meeting when it is scheduled.

### IACI Bill Tracking:

Watch for this listing in the coming weeks, which tracks all legislation on which IACI takes a position.



Questions or comments?  
Email us at [iaci@iaci.org](mailto:iaci@iaci.org).

