



Week Two Idaho Legislative Update for Jan. 13 – Jan. 17, 2024

It's safe to say that the pace of things is picking up in the Statehouse. House and Senate committees are making progress on the review and approval of rules. The Joint Finance and Appropriations Committee is immersed in debate over agency budgets and revenue forecasts and has already set maintenance budgets. There has also been a steady – though not unmanageable – stream of proposed legislation flowing through committees and to the House floor.

While we are still waiting for some of the big-ticket items to emerge - think school vouchers/tax credits, tax relief or health care and Medicaid changes – some new bill and familiar bills are worth bringing to your attention. The House Judicial, Rules and Administration Committee sent to the House floor legislation setting a minimum fine of \$300 for a first conviction for possession of three ounces of marijuana. Similar legislation that imposed a higher fine failed to pass last year.

What we can report is that some committees have been more active than others. The House and Senate Health and Welfare committees met over several days this week and reviewed and cleared more than 300 pages of rules. The House Judiciary, Rules and Administration Committee has debated and sent five bills to the floor. House State Affairs introduced a bill that would give local law enforcement authority and a mandate to enforce federal immigration laws.

Speaker Mike Moyle introduced [DOGE](#) legislation that would require state agencies to review all relevant code to determine whether statutes should be kept or scrapped. A review like this is in keeping with Gov. Little's drive a few years ago to cut regulation and red tape and the push by the incoming Trump Administration and the new office led by Elon Musk to cut federal red tape and streamline the regulatory framework. With this bill, The Speaker is now seeking to take the next step in Idaho and codifying the practice in code to mandate agencies to identify ways to make state government more efficient and less onerous.

We will not be surprised if at some point a mandate by the Legislature will come for local units of government. We also expect a lot of sections of code to be cut or partially deleted to further simplify and reduce the burden of government on citizens and businesses as the state continues to hold and defend the title of "the least regulated state" in America.

With the changes to the budget process last year, JFAC is ahead of schedule for the first time in years. Early this morning they set the maintenance budgets for agencies with massive spending, continued spending authority, cash transfers, and pages of intent language to guide the general services and basics of state government. Next, the joint committee will undertake the long list of requested increases, changes and asks from the Governor and agencies as well and paying for any policies that pass this session.

At the end of week two we are poised for the momentum to continue building next week. At this point, our take is that the mood under the dome remains positive. We're also enjoying getting to know the freshmen legislators better. It's funny how each class responds differently. Two years ago, the newbies were more insulated and guarded. Not so much with this group. And the sophomore class is much more comfortable this year as well. All legislators seem eager to solve problems and work through the process this year. Some are still trying to learn the ropes, rules and rituals, but at this point, this legislature has proved to be a fun group of eager policymakers.

All bills for the 2025 session can be found on the [Idaho State Legislative website](#). Interested in finding your legislator? Visit [HERE](#). Daily reading calendars and agendas are found [HERE](#). As usual, we're available to discuss if you have any questions.



Policies

[HB 14](#) - Idaho Code Cleanup Act - House State Affairs

This legislation requires each agency to follow a similar process to the ZBR rulemaking process, which requires each agency to study and delete unnecessary, obsolete, and outdated rules. Agencies must complete a review of their code sections no later than Sept. 1, 2025, and report to the Legislature the codes that fall into one of those three categories. A recommendation must be included in each agency report if it should be removed. It also allows agencies to make recommendations on codes necessary to the public health, safety, and welfare of Idahoans. Agencies can, but are not required, to also include information on unnecessary, obsolete, and outdated code sections that are not in their purview. The Legislature will take up the recommendations for consideration during the 2026 regular session.

Sponsor: Rep. Moyle (R-10)

[HB 17](#) - Wildfire Insurance-House Business

Aims to improve and stabilize the market with the creation of an Idaho Wildfire Risk Mitigation Stabilization Pool and Board. These entities would allow for a greater stability in the insurance market, which has decreased in some areas due to the risk of wildfire. Additionally, this would allow for mitigation of wildfire risk for property owners, reducing cost of property insurance. The plan of operation involves two steps, one that includes mitigation of wildfire risk for homeowners and the second that allows the board to develop strategies to stabilize the marketplace.

Sponsor: Rep Redman

Appropriations and Budgets

This is where appropriations and budgets of interest will appear as introduced in the session.

Rules

[HERE](#) is the link for the Index of all Pending Rules seeking legislative approval. Committees in both the House and Senate are assigned rules to approve. As a reminder, the rules docket needs to pass both the House and the Senate, they are set to go into effect but need to be enacted by legislation or executive order. Once a pending rule is approved, a (+) symbol will appear in front of the docket number. If a pending rule is not approved by the Legislature a (-) will appear in front of the docket number.

Department of Health and Welfare

(+) (+) [16-0309-2401](#) – Medicaid Basic Plan Benefits (ZBR Chapter Rewrite) – Proposed Rule