



Modifying the Members of Idaho's Oil and Gas Regulating Authority

The regulating authority for oil and gas development in Idaho will have an entirely new composition this year, pending the Idaho Legislature's approval of a bill that modifies the membership of the Idaho Oil and Gas Conservation Commission.

Natural gas development has been dubbed "Idaho's most exciting new industry" since natural gas reserves were discovered in western Idaho in 2009. So far, 11 natural gas wells have been drilled - three were dry and immediately plugged, and eight wells currently are shut in waiting for pipelines and other infrastructure; there remains no production of the resource in Idaho. However, the industry spent much of 2012 conducting seismic shoots, a way of modeling to determine what's underground. The industry says it is very encouraged by the data it gathered and hopes to drill more in 2013.



The Idaho Oil and Gas Conservation Commission regulates the exploration, drilling, and production of oil and gas resources on private, state and federal land in Idaho. Right now the commission is comprised of the five constitutional officers that make up the Land Board. The Idaho Department of Lands is the administrative arm of the commission.

The Senate Resources and Environment Committee today unanimously approved the [Senate Bill 1049](#), a bill sponsored by the Idaho Department of Lands. The bill now moves to the House Resources and Conservation Committee for consideration.

The IDL examined other states to come up with this proposal, which would change Idaho's commission membership to more closely resemble other states' oil and gas regulatory commissions.

What does the oil and gas bill do?

The proposed legislation will amend Idaho Code 47-317 by replacing the current members of the commission with five members appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate.

The appointed commission members would include:

- one member knowledgeable in oil and gas;
- one member knowledgeable in geology;
- one member knowledgeable in water;
- one private land or mineral owner in an area with oil and gas activity; and
- one private land owner without mineral rights

The legislation would also establish election of officers, Commission member compensation, frequency of meetings, staffing, and other duties. It allows the new commission to designate hearing officers, establish advisory committees related to oil and gas, and otherwise perform the duties associated with oil and gas regulation in Idaho.

The Idaho Oil and Gas Conservation Commission voted at its meeting in December 2012 to support the bill.

Idaho Department of Lands

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