

Meeting Date: January 28, 2021

Agenda Item No. 6

Agenda Item: Legislative Update

Bureau Chief Approval: ES

Prepared by: Paul Kline

Background: Staff will update the Commission about legislative activity since initiation of the 2021 Legislature on January 11. Weekly legislative conference calls initiate on February 4 at 8:00 am MST.

Agency-sponsored Legislation: At your regular commission on July 23, 2020, the Commission approved the Department to move one legislative idea forward to the 2021 Legislative Session. This legislative idea is reviewed below.

Define sage-grouse tags in 36-409 (Idaho Code); define the cost of sage-grouse tags in 36-416 (Idaho Code); define that a sport permit is no longer required to hunt sage-grouse in 36-1401 (Idaho Code). The purpose of this legislation is to provide better opportunity to the public to hunt sage-grouse by changing the hunt structure from one where a sport permit is required to one where a game tag is required. A limited tag framework for hunting sage-grouse will take into account sage-grouse population information so the number of tags made available each hunt year can be set based on biological information. This is a more responsible way to manage harvest and will maximize the number of tags made available to the public. The proposed cost for sage-grouse tags will remain the same or similar to the current cost for sage-grouse sport permits. Sharp-tailed grouse hunting will remain permit-based and not change over to the tag-framework.

Statutory Authority and/or Policy issues: Informational. Commission has authority to provide legislative policy guidance.

Public Involvement Process: Legislative discussions by the Commission are conducted in public on a weekly basis during the legislative session.

Staff Recommendation: Continue implementation of the legislative process directed by the Commission in November, 2020.

Justification: Legislative process requested by the Commission to stay abreast of legislative matters to provide timely policy direction and position.