

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS28094 / H0009

This legislation transitions the hunting framework for sage-grouse from a sport permit-based model to a tag-based model to better support sustainable hunting opportunity. The current sport permit model is implemented at a statewide scale and does not allow for harvest management within specific hunt areas. A game tag model allows Fish and Game managers to use population information to inform game tag availability and appropriately distribute harvest opportunity. The total number of sage-grouse harvested annually is expected to remain approximately the same under the new hunt framework. This legislation does not affect the sport permit-based hunting framework for sharp-tailed grouse.

This legislation is consistent with Executive Order No. 2015-04 Adopting Idaho's Sage-Grouse Management Plan signed by Governor Otter on May 27, 2015. This plan recommended adaptive management triggers to evaluate sage-grouse population and habitat changes. Since the formalization of Governor Otter's plan, the Department of Fish and Game has implemented management actions that are consistent with the plan and aimed at ensuring we have accurate and sufficient data to evaluate population status and trends. Moving to a tag-based hunt framework will better align Idaho's sage-grouse hunt season-setting process with our understanding of the different circumstances and variables that cause annual fluctuations in sage-grouse abundance and distribution at various habitat scales.

FISCAL NOTE

This legislation will not impact the State General Fund or the Fish and Game Fund. The proposed price for resident and nonresident game tags to hunt sage-grouse will remain the same as the current price of sport permits to hunt sage-grouse.

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DISCLAIMER: This statement of purpose and fiscal note are a mere attachment to this bill and prepared by a proponent of the bill. It is neither intended as an expression of legislative intent nor intended for any use outside of the legislative process, including judicial review (Joint Rule 18).