



Industry, counties reach groundbreaking deal on gas exploration

Sunday, January 29, 2012

For immediate release

Boise – Local governments will play a critical role in oversight of the natural gas industry thanks to an agreement announced today.

The Idaho Association of Counties and the Idaho Petroleum Council spent weeks collaborating on the new guidelines and framework, which will be included in legislation to be introduced in the Idaho Legislature next month.

“Local siting and operational issues are important to our members and to the people of Idaho,” said Dan Chadwick, executive director of the Idaho Association of Counties. “This consensus legislation promises counties and their residents that their unique insight will be an important part of our state’s growing natural gas industry.”

The legislation will include a requirement that the state notify local governments when a company applies for an exploration permit in that county. Local governments will be able to regulate construction and operation of the processing stations, pipelines and other infrastructure required for the exploration and delivery of natural gas, as long as the county rules do not prevent that infrastructure from being built.

Local governments will also have the freedom and flexibility to pass their own industry-specific ordinances as long as those rules do not conflict with state law. Local permits must also be issued on a timely basis, and cannot be structured in a way that would inhibit or prohibit development of the resource.

“This agreement is an example of what happens when reasonable people have a chance to sit down and forge compromise,” said Suzanne Budge, executive director of the Idaho Petroleum Council. “We commend the Idaho Association of Counties for seeking a solution that works for their members and that guarantees that local communities and the state will benefit from the development of clean, homegrown Idaho energy.”

Industry members also praised the agreement.

“We are committed to Idaho, and want to make sure the public officials and citizens they represent are completely comfortable with our industry and our work,” said Richard Brown, owner of Snake River Oil + Gas. “This agreement provides assurances for citizens and certainty for businesses, and is a model for other states to follow.”

The agreement will be folded into a bill which will be introduced and considered at the Idaho Legislature in the coming weeks.