



# STATE OF IDAHO



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## **Congressman Simpson helps Idaho in Invasive Species Fight Proposed Appropriation Requires Boat Decontaminations at Federal Waters**

Idaho continues to work to protect Idaho's waters from aquatic invasive species. Idaho's watercraft inspection and decontamination stations have performed over 25,000 inspections this season, intercepting 23 watercraft that were carrying invasive mussels into or through the state. These aquatic invasive species have not been found in Idaho to date and inspection programs aim to keep it that way. If introduced, they can spread through rivers and lakes, impacting native species and clogging infrastructure for power generation, recreation, irrigation, municipalities and industrial use.

Efforts to prevent the spread of these species have been offered a helping hand by Congressman Mike Simpson and the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior. Intent language has been included in the 2012 Interior Appropriation Bill, H.R. 2584, that adds \$1 million to the 2012 budget for implementing mandatory inspection, decontamination and law enforcement programs at all federally managed water bodies that are already impacted by invasive zebra and quagga mussels. Such investment of resources and focus is important since boats coming to Idaho from federally managed, fouled waterbodies such as the Lake Mead National Recreation Area present a significant threat to Idaho and the Pacific Northwest.

"Of the 23 mussel fouled watercraft that we have found at our inspection stations, nearly one-half originated from federal waters in Nevada and Arizona," said Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Celia Gould. "Federal reservoirs in the Colorado River system are known to be heavily infested with quagga and zebra mussels, and we know that some boats spend weeks or months in the Colorado River before coming back to Idaho and the Pacific Northwest. We don't need souvenirs from Lake Mead to show up in Hells Canyon or Lake Pend Oreille."

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"Recognition by Congress that the federal government needs to do a better job of containing such infestations in their waters and preventing the spread of these species to Idaho means so much to our state," Gould said. "It means that we have another tool to protect our agriculture, power generation, native species, and all of the other everyday users of Idaho's water."

Congress began considering H.R. 2584 this week. In the meantime, state efforts continue. "We started operating our inspection stations in mid-March, and plan to continue through Labor Day," Gould said. "We hope to find more fouled watercraft before they enter Idaho waters."

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