

Majority leader sees no budget reopening

Undated

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BOISE — Senate Majority Leader James Risch, R-Boise, said Tuesday he sees little possibility the Joint Finance Appropriation Committee will reopen budgets to approve increased appropriations.

He noted the JFAC adjourned a week ago and would need to reconvene to take such action, adding "it could be an entire enacting process."

Risch said he felt, however, the JFAC had done a good job in its budget approving actions.

Risch said the JFAC was instructed to fund the various agencies under the \$422.5 million revenue projection.

"It was a difficult job when they (stage agencies) want more than there is available money," said Risch. "I think they did well and worked hard and long to have a budget that will pass."

Risch said there is some concern over whether the \$195 million is enough for public education but sees little chance for increased appropriation this late in the session.

Risch said it is possible to adjourn Saturday, but conceded it likely will not take place until a week later.

"I think we have been getting along well," said Risch. "Most of our work has been to keeping the state house in order. We are doing just what needs to be done."

Risch said the Senate has been vastly different this year with the majority working well with the minority.

He pointed out there has been only one party line vote, that on the Northwest Power Bill to make its Idaho appointments bipartisan. It has passed both House, but faces a certain gubernatorial veto.

"We have a good understanding in the Senate on legislation and the issues are argued primarily on their merits without much partisan flavor," said Risch.