

House will consider bill to increase aircraft fees

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State Rep. John O. Sessions, R-Driggs, chairman of the House Transportation Committee, said Tuesday the House next week will consider a bill tripling the registration fee for general aircraft.

Sessions said the committee last week narrowly approved the bill by a 6-5 vote but recommended the increases will apply to general aircraft, meaning primarily the private airplanes, and not airlines.

The revenue would increase the state revenue from an estimated \$56,000 to \$188,000, said Sessions.

The registration fee is based on age and weight of an aircraft. As an example, he said a registration fee on a Cessna 210, costing \$200,000, would be increased from \$36 to \$90 a year.

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Exempted from the increase would be the scheduled carriers in Idaho of United, Western, Wien, Pacific Express, Cascade, Skywest and Transwestern.

Sessions also said the proposed gas rate hike of 1.5 cents per gallon, or from 3.5 to 5 cents, "is dead for this session."

Airline representatives in a hearing two weeks ago strongly opposed the increase, asserting their shrinking revenue could not stand further expenses.

Mrs. Carol Luther, Denver, Frontier Airlines representative, testified against both the gas tax and registration fee increase in the two meetings.

Sessions said Mrs. Luther also told him that Frontier is considering expansion of service into Idaho, including Idaho Falls.

She said Frontier is reviewing its entire system of service.