

# CANAMEX: The motive behind Kempthorn's end-of-session tantrum

*Governor deceives legislature; obligates state to interstate pact and construction of international "smart corridor"*

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by *The Idaho Observer*

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At the end of the legislative session Idaho Governor Dirk Kempthorne was pictured in state newspapers with a big red "veto" stamp, which he threatened to use indiscriminately until the legislature passed his pork-laden "Connecting Idaho" bill.

Freshman Third District Rep. Phil Hart, who was opposed to the bill because it obligated future generations of Idahoans to pay for a massive road improvement plan, commented that he had never experienced so much pressure in his life. That is saying a lot since Hart is an engineer and was formerly an Olympic-quality skier and cyclist.

Hart did vote to pass the bill, but after his committee removed the pork.

For those unfamiliar with Idaho geography, the panhandle near Canada is connected to the Boise capital (a third of the way to Mexico) by a winding goat trail called Highway 95. "Connecting Idaho" was a measure sold to the legislature as a way to improve commerce, communications and travel within the state of Idaho.

However, Kempthorne did not tell the legislators that the true purpose of blackmailing them to pass his pet bill was to partici-

pate in the CANAMEX Corridor Coalition teleconference in April—two weeks after the 2005 legislative session ended in Idaho. Kempthorne had already signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with four other western states' governors (Arizona, Utah, Nevada and Montana) in October, 2004. The MOU promises the state of Idaho's participation in the construction of the Canada/American/Mexican superhighway without legislative approval.

CANAMEX, the planning for which has been underway since 1995, is to be a super smart trade corridor featuring seamless cell phone coverage and surveillance cameras with hospitality and emergency services from border to border.

Idaho Eagle Forum Chapter President Jane Lesko has been collecting CANAMEX information and communicating with CANAMEX planners. Lesko believes that, had the Idaho legislature been aware that Kempthorne's "Connecting Idaho" was really "Connecting Mexico and Canada" they would not have passed the bill. She also believes that most of the CANAMEX planners believe their project will simply be good for people and good for the economy.

More info on CANAMEX will be presented in coming editions of *The IO*.

# Governor vetoes 8 bills after panel blocks his roads plan

### Standoff could result in longer legislative session

By Wayne Hoffman  
The Idaho Statesman

Gov. Dirk Kempthorne, angry with state representatives for stalling his \$1.6 billion highway construction plan, retaliated Thursday by vetoing eight bills from the House of Representatives and warning that any legislation from the House is "veto fodder" until the centerpiece of his agenda gets rolling again.

"I am willing to stay as long as it takes," Kempthorne told reporters. "This may be a very long session, folks."

Kempthorne then snagged a handful of bills from the top of a stack of 55 on his desk and systematically slapped "VETO" across the pages in red ink.

Eight bills stamped and rejected, Kempthorne then stopped and issued a threat:

"And I've got a whole lot of other bills I can take action on. It is time for us to have cooperation on the highway bill on behalf of the citizens of Idaho."

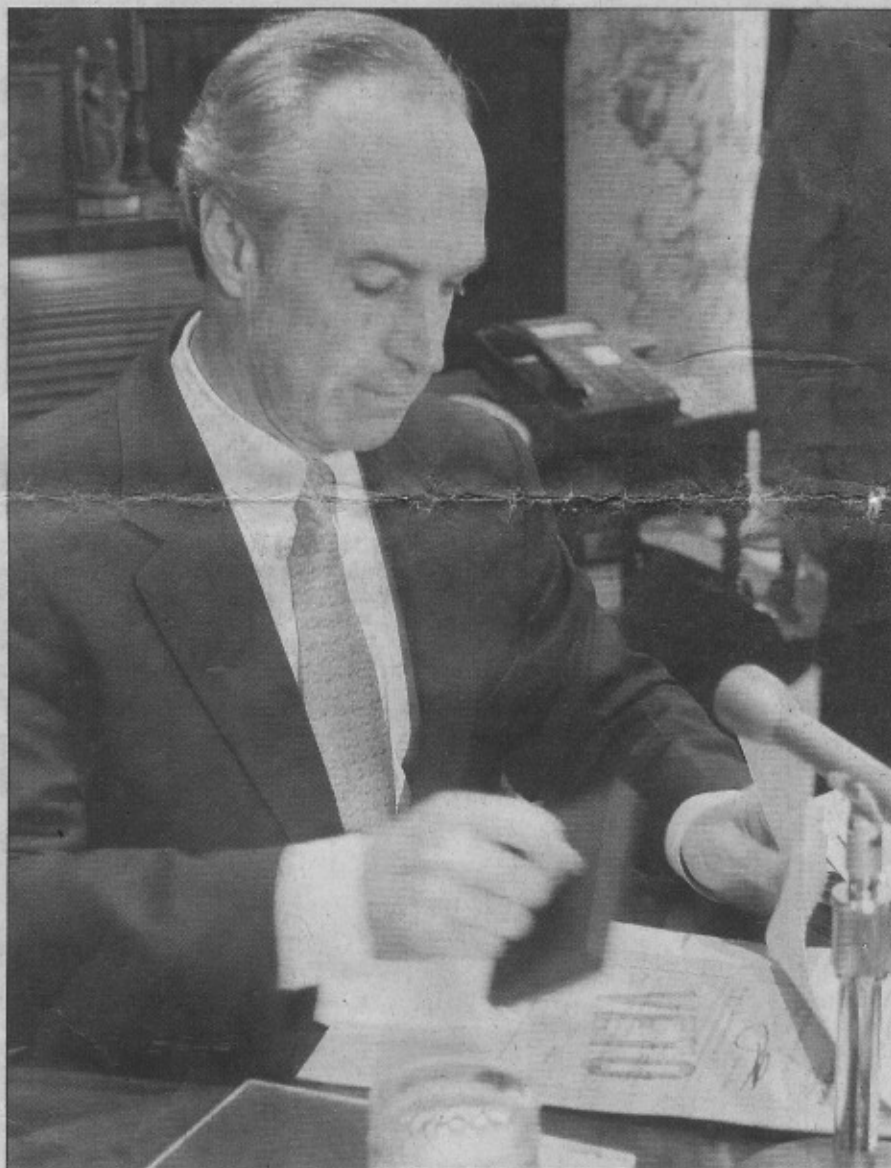
The governor added, "Every House bill that comes down here is veto fodder."

House leaders were not moved.

"In order to resolve things, someone has to be willing to negotiate," House Speaker Bruce Newcomb said, shaking his head when asked if Kempthorne has expressed willingness to come to the table.

"As I understand it, it's a one-way negotiation," House Majority Leader Lawrence Denney said. "You take what I want or I will veto? I can't see that as negotiation."

"He's a petulant cry baby, and you can quote me," House Commerce Chairman Robert Schaefer said. "He's



Darin Oswald / The Idaho Statesman

Gov. Dirk Kempthorne places a veto stamp on eight House bills in his office Thursday with a stack of 47 more to his left, ready for the same stamp, unless members of the House find a way to save his highway legislation.

behaving like a spoiled child."

Thursday marked the 81st day of the legislative session. Lawmakers had hoped to adjourn by now, but Kempthorne's actions have stalled progress. **See Legislature on page 11**

#### Inside on Main 11

- > What bills did the governor veto?
- > How does a veto work?
- > Chatter from the Statehouse

#### What Kempthorne said

'It is time for us to have cooperation on the highway bill ... Every House bill that comes down here is veto fodder.'

#### What lawmakers said

'As I understand it, it's a one-way negotiation. You take what I want or I will veto? I can't see that as negotiation.'



**LAWRENCE DENNEY**  
R-Midvale, majority leader

'He's a petulant cry baby, and you can quote me. He's behaving like a spoiled child.'



**ROBERT SCHAEFER** R-Nampa,  
Commerce Committee chairman

'I look forward to working with a future governor who believes in the principles of limited government, individual responsibility and fiscal conservatism.'



**JANICE MCGEACHIN**  
R-Idaho Falls, after one of her bills was vetoed

#### IN THE LEGISLATURE Full page, Local 4

##### Hunting and fishing fees up for vote

The House floor will next vote to increase license fees by 10 percent, which would help fund the agency that manages the fish and wildlife.

##### House OKs 1% merit pay for state workers

The House agreed to give state workers a 1 percent, one-time pay boost based on merit — only if the state collects enough tax dollars to afford it.