

IFF budget cuts taxes, provides funding for roads, schools

Boise, Idaho—The Idaho Freedom Foundation on Tuesday released an alternative to Gov. Butch Otter's budget proposal. The IFF budget plan dramatically lowers income taxes, gets rid of the sales tax on groceries, provides \$62.5 million for highways and increases funding for public schools. The budget contemplates spending \$3.05 billion, an increase of 3.8 percent over last year's appropriation. Otter's budget would increase spending by 6.5 percent, when fund transfers are treated as expenses.

The IFF budget also takes into account the \$25 million that is expected to be required to cover fire suppression costs, something Otter's budget does not.

"Our budget proves that lawmakers can provide a conservative, balanced budget that provides money for transportation without raising taxes," said IFF President Wayne Hoffman. "This, of course, will require making some difficult choices. Lawmakers will have to prioritize. Not everything in the governor's budget can be funded."

The IFF budget would require lawmakers to trim the FY16 base budget by 1.5 percent. IFF's budget leaves \$46.8 million available for additional tax relief.

Hoffman said the budget is a broad outline intended to show lawmakers what they could achieve if they're thoughtful about spending.

"Legislators have a real opportunity to address infrastructure needs and still protect Idahoans from having to pay higher taxes. It'll take hard work, but it will be worth it in the end," Hoffman said. "Our hope is that lawmakers are willing to take the challenge."