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"After hearing testimony from dozens of students, teachers and parents, all in favor of newly revised science standards for Idaho K-12 schools, the House Education Committee voted Feb. 7 to strip out sections from the standards that referred to the impact of fossil fuels on the environment — climate change," reports [Boise Weekly](#) [4] (February 7, 2018).

The 12-4 vote was on a motion proposed by Scott Syme (R-District 11) — who led the charge to remove passages referring to climate change and human impact on the environment from the proposed standards in 2017 — to remove ESS 3-4-1, "Earth and Human Activity," and all of the "supporting content" material throughout the standards.

ESS 3-4-1 begins, "Obtain and combine information to describe that energy and fuels are derived from natural resources and their uses affect the environment." Negative environmental impacts of energy use are explicitly mentioned, including "air pollution from burning of fossil fuels."

Strangely, ESS 3-4-1 was not among the performance expectations standards rejected by the committee, and then by the legislature, in 2017. A modified version of ESS 3-MS-5, which was rejected in 2017, was not rejected by the committee in its 2018 vote, although it acknowledges that "human activities" are among the "factors that cause climate variability."

In deleting the "supporting content" material from the proposed standards, consisting of fifty-seven

sections, the committee rejected modified versions of the four remaining passages dealing with climate change that it rejected in 2017. But it also rejected plenty of material that it, and then the legislature, approved in 2017.

Sherri Ybarra, the state superintendent of public instruction, minimized the impact of the removal of the "supporting content" material, [according](#) [5] to the *Spokane Spokesman-Review* (February 7, 2018): "Schools will figure it out. The information will still be available. It doesn't need to be a state mandate."

But the science supervisor of the Boise School District, Christopher Taylor, previously [explained](#) [6] to *The New York Times* (February 6, 2018) that teachers often need the presence of climate change in the standards to resist community pressure against its teaching: "It's these small rural districts ... They will do what the state says."

Boise science teacher Erin Stutzman later [told](#) [7] *The New York Times* (February 7, 2018) that the committee's decision "disregards science and the scientists who are out there doing the work," and NCSE's Glenn Branch added that he regarded the committee's vote as "a continuation of the assault" on the inclusion of climate change in Idaho's science standards.

The next stop for the standards is the Senate Education Committee, whose chair earlier [told](#) [8] the *Spokesman-Review* (February 6, 2018) that he would schedule a review of the standards after the House Education Committee acted. A concurrent resolution of both houses would be necessary to reject the standards.

[Updated February 8, 2018, by the addition of the next-to-last paragraph.]

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