

# IDAHO TO CHANGE LEGAL DRIVING AGE FROM 14 TO 16 YEARS IN SEPTEMBER

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Effective Sept. 15, Idaho's legal driving age goes from 14 to 16.

Gov. Cecil Andrus on Tuesday signed the legislation into law, ending a long debate in the Legislature over whether 14-year-olds should be allowed to continue to drive. The governor also signed the last of 426 bills he approved from the 1989 legislative session. He also vetoed eight bills, two from the Senate and six from the House. The two vetoes while the Legislature was still in session both were sustained.

But as he signed bills designed to improve water quality, the governor notified legislative leaders that they failed to provide the necessary funding. It would take more than \$1.2 million to carry out the directives, the governor said.

"I congratulate the Legislature for its accomplishments in environmental protection, and I am eager to have these important water quality initiatives in place and functioning," Andrus said.

He said he has directed the state agencies and advisory councils to do what they could to carry out the new requirements without proper funding.

"I believe I have gone as far as possible without setting the totally unacceptable precedent of having state agencies take on obligations without sensible funding," the governor told House Speaker Tom Boyd and Senate President Pro Tem Michael Crapo.

Until Sept. 15, Idaho will continue to license 14-year-olds for daylight-only driving.

After that date, a young driver must obtain a special license, good only for work or school purposes. Fifteen-year-olds can get a new learner's permit, good for driving instruction with a licensed adult in the front seat.

Andrus said the main reason he signed the bill was his concern for highway safety.

"It would be my hope that the move to increase the driving age brings with it a corresponding reduction in highway deaths and injuries," the governor said.

"If lives are saved and injuries avoided, the effort will be worthwhile," he said.

The governor also signed a bill making permanent the Idaho Commission on Hispanic Affairs, and a measure boosting bonding authority of the Idaho Housing Agency to \$990 million.

"With this legislation we estimate that \$350 million in new single-family mortgage loans can be made available over the next five years," he said. "That will make it possible for more than 7,500 Idaho families and individuals to realize the dream of owning a first home."

He said the legislation should provide for an extra 1,200 to 1,500 new homes by 1992.

Andrus said it will cost \$166,200 to develop a comprehensive state nutrient management plan for surface water, with priority given to northern Idaho lakes. The cost for development of a ground water quality plan is estimated at \$134,000.

Estimated cost of a bill requiring the Department of Agriculture to develop and administer a comprehensive ground water quality monitoring network was set at \$679,400.

Another bill, requiring the licensing of farmers applying chemicals through irrigation, would cost \$274,600 for 250 annual audits of irrigation systems.