Hatfield to chair Senate Agriculture, Water and Rural Economic Development Committee

Local News

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Olympia, WA - Calling it an opportunity to ensure issues important to rural Washington get proper attention, Sen. Brian Hatfield has accepted the chairmanship of the Senate Agriculture, Water & Rural Economic Development committee.

“The vast majority of Washington state is made up of rural communities,” said Hatfield, D-Raymond. “In accepting the chairmanship of this committee, I feel that I am ensuring that the voice of rural Washington will be heard and the areas that matter most to its residents will receive their deserved consideration from the senate.”

Hatfield was one of three Senate Democrats to accept a committee chair under a structure approved by the Republican caucus, which took control of the Senate chamber on Monday afternoon. While he eventually accepted the chairmanship, Hatfield spoke out against the committee set-up which will feature two Democratic chairs, 11 Republican chairs and one co-chair. Instead, Hatfield supported a power-sharing agreement in which every Senate Committee would feature Democrat and Republican co-chairmanship.

“This is real bipartisanship. This is how we filter out the divisiveness. This is how we screen out the distraction. This is how we stabilize an unstable majority,” said Hatfield in support of the co-chairing proposal. “What we’re offering here is a recipe for focus and for getting results for the people of the state of Washington.”

The proposal was defeated on a 25-23 vote. With the committee structure decided, Hatfield says both sides will need to work together to seek truly bipartisan solutions to create jobs, craft a new budget and respond to the Supreme Court’s order to better fund Washington’s K-12 education system.