

**MINUTES OF THE
TAX REFORM TASK FORCE PUBLIC HEARING**
Tuesday, October 25, 2005 – 12:00 p.m. – Western Park, Vernal, UT

Members Present:

Rep. Wayne A. Harper, House Chair
Sen. Howard A. Stephenson
Sen. Mike Dmitrich
Rep. Gregory H. Hughes
Rep. Todd E. Kiser
Rep. Rosalind J. McGee
Rep. Merlynn T. Newbold
Rep. Gordon E. Snow
Comm. Pam R. Hendrickson

Members Absent:

Sen. Curtis S. Bramble, Senate Chair
Pres. John L. Valentine
Rep. Ralph Becker
Rep. John Dougall
Rep. Stephen H. Urquhart
Mr. Neil H. Ashdown

Staff Present:

Mr. Phillip V. Dean, Policy Analyst
Ms. Angela D. Oakes, Associate General Counsel
Mr. Leif Elder, Research Assistant

Note: A list of others present, copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at www.le.utah.gov.

1. Welcome and Introduction

Chair Harper called the meeting to order at 12:00 Noon.

Task Force members introduced themselves.

2. Review of Task Force Recommendations -- Sen. Curtis S. Bramble, Senate Chair and Rep. Wayne A. Harper, House Chair

Rep. Harper reviewed the task force recommendations.

3. Public Comment on Task Force Recommendations

Mr. Ken Basset, Vernal City Manager, said that he served as a member of the tax team for the Utah League of Cities and Towns. He distributed and discussed "Utah League of Cities and Towns Tax Position." He said that he fully agrees with the position described in the pamphlet. He said that the local option sales tax belongs to cities. He also said that his city would raise the property tax to make up for lost sales tax revenue.

Mr. John Hullinger, Hullinger Mortuary, spoke in favor of exempting personal property from the property tax.

Mr. Mike Wilkins, Uintah County Clerk and Auditor, spoke in favor of an indexed property tax. He said personal property is a source from which Uintah County collects a large amount of property tax. He said that the sales and use tax is a fair tax because purchases are discretionary.

Mr. Steve Wallis, Vernal Express, spoke against imposing the sales and use tax on sales of newspapers.

Mr. Dan Price, citizen, said that he is a former legislator. He said that he supports imposition of the sales and use tax on sales of food.

Mr. Bert Clark, Vernal City, said he was interested to know if there were any changes on the way "green belts" are taxed.

Mr. Larry Ross, Duchesne County Commissioner, spoke in favor of allowing those who qualify for the circuit breaker program to obtain benefits more easily than is now possible. He spoke in favor of removing the sales tax on food, but warned about reducing the sales and use tax. He spoke in favor of creating an internet tax. He also said he would like to see the state's purpose and use of severance tax to be defined more clearly.

Mr. Dave Haslam, Uintah County Commissioner, said that any shift to property tax would hurt Uintah County, especially shifting property tax to make up for lost sales tax revenue. He said that cities need sales and use tax revenues. He spoke in favor of an inflationary adjustment to the certified property tax rate.

Sen. Beverly Ann Evans, Utah State Senator, spoke in favor of keeping the community resort tax. She reminded the Task Force that it isn't the end of the world if they don't do anything.

Rep. John Mathis, Utah State Representative, asked the Task Force to be careful with the changes they are making.

4. Adjourn

Chair Harper adjourned the meeting.