

**MINUTES OF THE
TRANSPORTATION, ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY & NATIONAL GUARD
APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
Room W010, West Office Building, State Capitol Complex
Wednesday, January 16, 2008**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sen. Carlene Walker, Co-Chair
Rep. Wayne Harper, Co-Chair
Rep. Glenn A. Donnelson
Rep. Neil Hansen
Rep. Neal B. Hendrickson
Rep. Todd E. Kiser
Rep. Becky Lockhart
Rep. Kenneth Sumsion

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sen. Fred Fife
Sen. Sheldon Killpack
Sen. John Valentine
Rep. Patrick Painter

STAFF PRESENT: Mark C. Bleazard, Fiscal Analyst
Rosemary Young, Committee Secretary

Note: A list of visitors and copy of handouts are filed with committee minutes.

Sen. Walker called the meeting to order at 9:26 a.m. and welcomed all. A brief overview of the business of the committee and prospective agenda were discussed. Each of the departments was asked to come prepared to discuss what the base budget is purchasing, recommended changes if funds were increased or decreased, performance measures, accomplishments, suggestions to redirect base budgets, how money has been expended year to date, program needs for the next five years, and key issues for the 2008 session. A copy of "Significant Factors Driving Agency Budget requests FY 2008 - FY 2009" was distributed to the committee.

National Guard

Jefferson Burton, Assistant Adjutant General for Army of the National Guard, assisted by Col. Scott Olson, distributed a handout and informed the committee that there are currently 6653 Utah guardsmen with about 11% deployed at the present time on four continents. The number one priority for the guard is on-going funding of \$500,000 for tuition assistance which is a primary factor in recruiting and retaining quality people. Other requests are \$5,000,000 for renovation of existing armories (Federal funds are used for maintenance of armories but not renovation.), \$51,200 for an additional FTE, \$5,500 to insure the TASS Barracks, \$54,300 for ITS service charge and life cycle upgrades, and \$500,000 for the Fort Douglas Museum utility upgrade.

Todd Valline, Resource Manager National Guard, explained that state funds can only be spent in four categories as mandated by the federal government: administrative operations, support of cooperative agreements with the federal government, maintenance and utilities of armories, and tuition assistance.

Rep. Kiser expressed appreciation to the National Guard for their service to the nation and the community.

Veterans' Affairs

Dennis McFall, Deputy Director of the Utah Department of Veterans Affairs, distributed a handout and explained that the department was elevated from division status July 1, 2007. The base budget covers general administrative costs. The mission is to educate and assist veterans relative to the benefits to which they are entitled. The department was asked by the governor to develop a comprehensive data-base for all veterans to expedite communications of various kinds. Currently the department is housed at the VA hospital at no charge, but the space is inadequate for additional personnel. The number one priority is to move forward with funding the Northern Utah State Veterans Nursing Home for which the federal 65% monies are yet to be forthcoming. The total is \$19,500,000 which is on the governor's budget. It is critical to the department that other appropriated funds be ongoing to attract and maintain high quality personnel. The department is seeing more people than previously and spending more time with each case.

Department of Environmental Quality

Rick Sprott, Executive Director of the Department of Environmental Quality, assisted by Bill Sinclair, Deputy Director, introduced his staff and discussed the handout from the department. The budget funds implementation of federal programs from various environmental acts. Eighty-five percent of the budget goes to personnel services. DEQ's mission is to safeguard public health and quality of life by protecting and enhancing the environment through air, land, and water. He directed the attention of the committee to a long list of accomplishments beginning with the fact that 99.84% of Utahns get drinking water from an approved system and ending with the fact that the Department continues to bring together stakeholders and form partnerships to deal with a variety of issues.

Factors that require an adjustment in current funding are the depletion of federal carryover funds in air quality, need to fully staff the core program workload, need to replace and enhance monitoring, and mercury analysis and pollution source determinations in water quality. Just over half of the appropriated \$1,500,000 has been spent so far this fiscal year.

Significant challenges for the next five years are energy and meeting new ozone standards. One budget challenge results from the disconnect of one fiscal year when pay raises are authorized and fees come in that can be used to pay that share. Also the Environmental Quality Restricted

Account balance has been declining. Three bills affecting the department are expected to be presented during this session.

Walt Baker, Director of the Division of Water Quality, responded to questions concerning the PCB's and carp in Utah Lake. Brad Johnson, Director of the Division of Environmental Response and Remediation, reviewed the history of the oil leak in Gunnison and explained what methods are used to identify a leak in a timely way. Remediation efforts and attendant costs were also explained. It is expected that the costs will be more than the \$1,000,000 coverage limit available through the Petroleum Storage Tank Trust Fund. Ken Bousfield, Director of the Division of Drinking Water, explained how the Wellhead Protection Program applies to spills such as the one under discussion.

Department of Transportation

John Njord, Executive Director of the Department of Transportation, and Carlos Braceras, Deputy Director, distributed a packet of information and discussed the goals and importance of transportation. The department sees transportation infrastructure as one leg of a three-legged stool, the other two legs being quality of life and economic development. Transportation infrastructure provides the foundation upon which quality of life and economic development can be built. The four goals of the department are: 1. Take care of what we have. 2. Make the system work better. 3. Improve safety. 4. Increase capacity. It was pointed out that there is a four-year trend toward the negative in the condition of arterial and collector roads. There was discussion of the challenges of snow removal on highways that have no central median. The cost of snow removal is about \$700,000 per storm to remove snow and ice from state highways. The snow budget of about \$18,000,000 will be exceeded this year.

The department takes fatalities very seriously and works at safety improvements with a goal of reducing traffic-related fatalities on Utah highways by 2% each year. That goal is being approached, but pedestrian fatalities have spiked in the last two years. The overall goal is zero fatalities. The four "E"s the department uses to address the problem are: engineering, enforcement, emergency services, and education.

The Governor's Budget recommendations were presented with bridge preservation and replacement specifically discussed. In the state there are 628 bridges built in the 50's and 60's with the best technology of the time whose design life is 40 years. In the next decade these bridges need to be replaced. With present technology there should be a 70 year life for new bridges. The governor is recommending \$20,000,000 ongoing and \$50,000,000 one time from the General Fund for bridge replacement. The necessity of corridor preservation was discussed, and the Governor is recommending \$30,000,000 one time from the General Fund. The choke-point projects funded last year have been successful. Some large projects still need to be done such as I-15 in southern Salt Lake County and Utah County, and every day of delay costs the state nearly half a million dollars in increased costs. The governor is recommending \$40,000,000

one time General Fund for these projects. The committee was assured that no such bridge collapse as the one in Minneapolis is likely to occur in Utah.

Carlos Braceras, Deputy Director, addressed future needs in meeting department goals of taking care of what we have and increasing capacity. Pavements and bridges are the two largest assets for which they have responsibility. A graphic provided by the Mountain Land Association of Governments and Wasatch Front Regional Council demonstrated the projected increase in the level of congestion along the Wasatch Front. Other major unfunded highway needs statewide were listed to the total of \$16.5 billion dollars.

There was discussion of the appropriate use of B & C Road Funds and a new raised median on Washington Blvd. in Ogden. The department was asked to provide a plan of finance for I-15, Mountain View Corridor, and Southern Corridor and to report on what has been done with the choke-point money as well as what bridges have been done in the last few years or will be addressed with new monies. Problems on State Street from Fashion Place Mall to Real Stadium were brought up, and it was proposed that maybe choke-point money and other funds be used to accelerate solutions.

MOTION: Rep. Hansen moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously with Rep. Donnelson, Rep. Hendrickson, and Rep. Lockhart absent for the vote.

Sen Walker adjourned the meeting at 12:04 p.m.

Rep. Wayne Harper, Co-Chair

Sen. Carlene Walker, Co-Chair