

**MINUTES OF THE
NATIVE AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE LIAISON COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, September 24, 2008 – 4:00 p.m. – Western Park Convention Center, Vernal, Utah

Members Present:

Sen. Kevin T. VanTassell, Senate Chair
Rep. DeMar “Bud” Bowman, House Chair
Rep. Brad King
Rep. Mark A. Wheatley

Rep. James R. Gowans
Rep. Kay L. McIff
Rep. Michael E. Noel

Members Absent:

Sen. Fred Fife
Sen. Patricia W. Jones
Sen. Dennis E. Stowell
Rep. Douglas C. Aagard

Staff Present:

Mr. John Q. Cannon, Policy Analyst
Ms. Patricia Owen, Associate General Counsel

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. Committee Business

Chair Bowman called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m.

Sen. VanTassell mentioned the progress made in the Legislature for Native Americans. He honored Rep. Bowman for his service in the Legislature and noted his upcoming departure from it.

Mr. Cannon distributed and reviewed, "Utah's Legislature."

2. Dialogue With Tribal Leaders

Mr. Bruce Parry, Chairman, Northwestern Band of Shoshone, expressed appreciation for the Legislature’s work last year and to the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) for their help. He reviewed his tribe's efforts to increase heritage tourism in Northern Utah and expressed appreciation to the Legislature for their support.

Mr. Parry expressed appreciation for the modification that was made in the tax exempt form. He explained that in order to qualify for the sales tax exemption, a product has to be delivered to the reservation. Because that is problematic for their tribe, he asked that the Legislature consider changing the statute.

Mr. Curtis Cesspooch, Chairman of the Business Committee, Northern Ute Tribe, expressed interest in oil and gas issues and asked if there were any bills being drafted relating specifically to minerals or oil shale development. He asked if incentives are being offered for oil shale development and if so, will the tribes be included? He also mentioned that tribal identifications (IDs) are sometimes not recognized and asked if the Legislature could consider this issue.

Sen. VanTassell responded by reviewing the companies that are interested in developing oil shale. He explained Congressman Matheson's efforts on the federal level and said he would work with the tribes as the issue moves forward. He also explained that tribal ID’s are accepted in the banking world, but if there is a need to make that recognition universally accepted, he could support that effort.

Mr. Rupert Steele, Chair, Confederated Tribes of Goshutes, said it would be helpful for vendors to have the tax exemption forms available at their places of business.

Mr. Steele also addressed the difficulty in the tribal ID's not being accepted by different departments, particularly by the Department of Public Safety.

Ms. Irene Cuch, Vice Chair, Ute Indian Tribe at Fort Duchesne, raised the tribe's concern about Medicaid funds needed to pay for medical expenses of members and reimbursement to Indian Health Services (IHS) in Phoenix. She stated they would like to have the monies returned to the tribe to be used in their contract health system.

Mr. Leo Manheimer, President, Navajo Mountain Chapter, introduced other Chapter officials. He distributed a document to the Committee which gave a glimpse of Navajo Mountain Chapter's priority projects, their current status, and the need for planning and construction funds. Even though they are having some success in getting the needed funding, their overall concern is their isolation and being able to obtain critical services. He also made mention of accomplishments made by their schools in Navajo Mountain.

Rep. King agreed that Navajo Mountain's isolation made transportation and obtaining services very problematic. He reviewed their infrastructure challenges. He acknowledged their efforts and success regarding education.

Mr. Clarence Rockwell, Administrator, Utah Navajo Commission, discussed Congressional action regarding the Navajo Trust Fund and the transition to a new trustee. He stated the Commission would like to see the state sell the assets in Blanding and consolidate the regional government facilities in Montezuma Creek. He also discussed the working relationship with the Navajo Revitalization Fund and expressed a desire to have oversight at the local level for Navajo Revitalization Fund projects. He also expressed a desire to have the Navajo Revitalization Fund cap raised from \$3 million to \$4 or \$5 million.

Mr. Rockwell addressed the Pelt case and expressed a desire to settle the case. He acknowledged the help they have received from the state housing programs and encouraged the Legislature to continue that support as housing is still a big problem for them.

Ms. Robin Traxell, Chair, Utah Indian Health Advisory Board, Northwestern Band of Shoshone, requested assistance from the Committee in having unique Indian citizen needs and tribal governments addressed in the health system reform effort. She expressed concern because of the complexity of tribal, state, and federal relationships in health care issues and the need for continued consultation with the Health Department as changes are being made.

Dr. Chuck Foster, Indian Education Specialist, Utah State Office of Education, encouraged the preservation of native languages. He equated languages to identity and said the loss of them would be a loss to the Native American culture.

Ms. Lora Tom, Tribal Chairwoman, Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah, expressed the need for encouragement and support to help tribes with the issue of emergency preparedness. She would like to see coordination with the state and counties on these issues.

Mr. Clayton Long, San Juan School District, expressed appreciation to the Legislature for the funding and support of the immersion and dual language program for San Juan School District. They look forward to beginning this fall and he encouraged continued support for the building of the program.

Ms. Eileen Quintana, Title VII Indian Education in Nebo School District, expressed her feelings that there should be more sharing of data between tribes and schools. She mentioned her students' interest in ancestral lands and encouraged the consideration of tribal flags being flown at the state capitol building.

Mr. Jeff Simons, Weber State University, Sioux from Montana, discussed the efforts and progress that have been made in the state of Montana. He noted that in Montana, teachers are required to have an endorsement in tribal culture in order to teach on the reservations.

Ms. Ella Dayzie, Executive Director, Indian Walk-In Center, discussed the importance of urban Indians and their programs and concerns. She requested support for the Indian Health Improvement Act.

Mr. Alex Bitsinnie, Chapter Vice President, Navajo Mountain Utah, distributed a letter to the Committee that discussed children and adult protective services in Navajo Mountain.

Rep. Bowman adjourned the meeting at 5:40 p.m.