

**MINUTES OF THE
PUBLIC UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY INTERIM COMMITTEE**

Wednesday, October 21, 2009 – 8:30 a.m. – Room 20 House Building

Members Present:

Sen. Stephen H. Urquhart, Senate Chair
Rep. Michael E. Noel, House Chair
Sen. Brent H. Goodfellow
Sen. Mark B. Madsen
Rep. Kevin T. Van Tassell
Pres. Michael G. Waddoups
Rep. Roger E. Barrus
Rep. Julie Fisher
Rep. Lorie D. Fowlke
Rep. James R. Gowans
Rep. Richard A. Greenwood
Rep. Lynn N. Hemingway
Rep. Christopher N. Herrod
Rep. F. Jay Seegmiller

Rep. Ryan D. Wilcox
Rep. Bradley A. Winn

Members Absent:

Rep. Melvin R. Brown

Staff Present:

Mr. Richard C. North, Policy Analyst
Mr. Christopher R. Parker, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Tracey Fredman, Legislative Secretary

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

1. Committee Business

Chair Noel called the meeting to order at 8:43 a.m.

MOTION: Rep. Fisher moved to approve the minutes of the September 16, 2009 meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Madsen, Sen. Van Tassell, Pres. Waddoups, and Rep. Barrus were absent for the vote.

2. Milford Wind Corridor Project

Mr. Peter Sullivan, Director, First Wind Corporation, distributed and presented "Milford Wind Corridor." Mr. Sullivan briefed the Committee on the development and economic benefits of the Milford Wind Project and responded to committee members' questions.

Ms. Shelley Teuscher, Director, Government Operations, Parsons Behle & Latimer, responded to committee members' questions on behalf of First Wind Corporation.

3. Nucor Steel - Impact of Carbon Taxes

Mr. Dave Smith, Vice President, Nucor Steel, discussed some of the global effects of regional cap and trade programs. He reported on currency exchange rates between the United States and China, and the ability of United States' corporations to compete with international corporations. Mr. Smith explained how cap and trade has the potential of increasing the amount of business for foreign manufacturers who choose not to commit to CO2 emission controls and suggested reconsideration of the science behind global warming concerns and making any cap and trade or carbon tax programs border-adjustable.

4. Compressed Air Technology for Wind Farms

Mr. Christopher Thomas, Policy Director, Healthy Environment Alliance of Utah, discussed the use of compressed air technology to produce electricity when the wind is not active. He talked about the advantages and science behind compressed air energy storage, and responded to committee members' questions.

5. Hydro-Gasification: Energy Development Process

Mr. Jim Guthrie, President, Virasco Energy Corporation, distributed and presented "Synthetic Diesel Production from Domestic Feedstocks." He briefed committee members on the development and science of gasification technologies to generate electricity from organic feedstock converted to oil, gas, gasoline, or diesel.

Mr. Guthrie also commented briefly on a pending project to build a test plant in southern Utah.

6. Climate Change Science Report

Chair Noel introduced the issue.

Dr. W. James Steenburgh, Chair, Department of Atmospheric Sciences, University of Utah, discussed how climate is studied by scientists. Dr. Steenburgh summarized the findings of the Blue Ribbon Advisory Council on Climate Change Report (BRAC Report) to Governor Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., and stated that there is a preponderance of evidence that the warming of Earth's climate system is very likely the result of human-generated increases in greenhouse gases.

Dr. Roy W. Spencer, University of Alabama in Huntsville, said climate change may be due to natural climate cycles, and that a study of these cycles as the primary source of climate change should be objectively researched before rushing to consider public policy solutions.

Mr. John Wangsgaard, citizen, talked about other reports of cyclical climate changes in the northern hemisphere that offer information differing from what was offered in the BRAC Report.

Mr. Scott McCloud, citizen, said that just because a consensus of scientists believe a certain thing does not necessarily make the majority correct.

Ms. Sara Wright, Utah Clean Energy, said there are cost effective programs that could be put in place now to help reduce energy consumption in the non-transportation sector through energy efficiency. These programs would help reduce emissions, and assist businesses and families economically.

Mr. Randy Parker, Utah Farm Bureau Federation, said cap and trade would put a heavy burden on Utah farmers.

Dr. Tim Garrett, Associate Professor, Department of Atmospheric Sciences, University of Utah, responded to committee members' questions regarding historical climate warming during earlier periods in Earth's history.

Mr. Bob Ferguson, President, Science and Public Policy Institute, indicated that a significant amount of data was excluded from the BRAC Report which could have changed the conclusions substantially.

Mr. Michael Mielke, Post Carbon Salt Lake, spoke in favor of continued study on the issue of global warming in support of Dr. Spencer's suggestion that there is still much to learn. He also indicated that the risks to the next generation are substantial and that should be a major consideration in the policy making process.

7. Other Items / Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Hemingway moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Sen. Urquhart, Rep. Fisher, Rep. Greenwood, and Rep. Winn were absent for the vote.

Chair Noel adjourned the meeting at 12:01 p.m.