

**MINUTES OF THE  
SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE, AND ENVIRONMENT  
CONFIRMATION COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, September 1, 2009 – 10:00 a.m. – Room 450 State Capitol

**Members Present:**

Sen. Dennis E. Stowell, Chair  
Sen. Ralph Okerlund  
Sen. Kevin T. Van Tassell

**Staff Present:**

Mr. J Brian Allred, Policy Analyst  
Ms. Emily R. Brown, Associate General Counsel  
Mr. Joy L. Miller, Legislative Secretary

**Members Excused:**

Sen. Gene Davis  
Sen. Margaret Dayton

**Note:** A list of others present, a copy of related materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at [www.le.utah.gov](http://www.le.utah.gov).

**1. Committee Business**

Chair Stowell called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Members of the Committee and staff introduced themselves.

**MOTION:** Sen. Van Tassell moved to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2009 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Consideration of Appointment of Amanda Smith as Executive Director of the Department of Environmental Quality**

Ms. Amanda Smith introduced herself and her family. She stated she has been struck with the professionalism and critical role the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) plays in state government. Ms. Smith discussed some of the challenges that face DEQ such as impacts resulting from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency designations, water quality, and budget issues and constraints. She indicated that she is up to facing these challenges.

Ms. Smith responded to questions from the Committee regarding the following issues:

- keeping the Environmental Quality Restricted Account viable
- the role of the executive director of the DEQ concerning state policies
- morale problems with the DEQ (e.g. salaries and the new building), and how do salaries and wages compare with corresponding states
- Ms. Smith's experiences in handling resolutions of disputes involving personnel and accusations of insubordination
- the difficulty small rural communities have in funding clean up of large environmental spills
- the affect of air quality regulations on the development of resource management plans

Mr. Bill Sinclair, Deputy Director, DEQ, expressed his support for Ms. Smith. He said that the executive director has to interact with a wide variety of stakeholders with diverse opinions. He stated that Ms. Smith is respectful, personable, a good listener, and a team builder and would do an outstanding job.

Mr. Gayle McKeachnie, attorney, distributed a written copy of his comments to the Committee. He said that he regarded Ms. Smith as one of the most competent and effective persons he has ever worked with. He noted that the state would be well served if she were to be confirmed as the executive director.

Minutes of the Natural Resources, Agriculture,  
and Environment Confirmation Committee  
September 1, 2009  
Page 2

Ms. Tani Downing, Director, Division of Risk Management, stated that she has observed Ms. Smith take on many difficult issues in which she was able to find the common ground between the governor and the individual who raised the issue. She asked that the Committee recommend Ms. Smith's confirmation.

Mr. Jason Perry, Governor's Chief of Staff, reiterated that Ms. Smith has the complete support of Governor Gary Herbert and his staff.

**MOTION:** Sen. Van Tassell moved to recommend to the Senate that Ms. Smith be confirmed as the executive director of the DEQ. The motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Sen. Okerlund moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Stowell adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.