

(Draft - Awaiting Formal Approval)  
**MINUTES OF THE  
NATIVE AMERICAN LEGISLATIVE LIAISON COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, August 30, 2011 – 4:00 p.m. – Salt Lake City Marriott University Park  
480 Wakara Way, Salt Lake City, UT

**Members Present:**

Sen. Kevin T. Van Tassell, Senate Chair  
Sen. Patricia W. Jones  
Sen. Luz Robles  
Rep. Marie Poulson  
Rep. Douglas Sagers  
Rep. Christine F. Watkins  
Rep. Mark A. Wheatley

**Members Absent:**

Rep. Jack R. Draxler, House Chair  
Sen. Casey O. Anderson  
Rep. Kay L. McIff  
Rep. Michael E. Noel

**Staff Present:**

Mr. John Q. Cannon, Managing Policy Analyst  
Ms. Patricia Owen, Associate General Counsel  
Ms. Wendy L. Bangerter, Legislative Secretary

Note: A list of others present and a copy of related materials can be found at [www.le.utah.gov](http://www.le.utah.gov).

**1. Committee Business**

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

**MOTION:** Rep. Wheatley moved to approve the minutes of the April 21-22, 2011 meetings. The motion passed unanimously.

**2. Dialogue with Tribal Leaders**

Mr. Larry Dawson, Utah Department of Veteran's Affairs, explained that the purpose of the Department of Veterans' Affairs is to ensure veterans know and can receive the benefits they deserve. He specifically spoke to the benefits offered to the Native American population, noting the difficulty of making some benefits available in the areas where the Native American veterans live. He explained efforts to make benefits available to them at a home base such as in rural health care clinics. He explained the use of technology that allows them to be seen by a doctor located in Salt Lake City while being assisted by a nurse practitioner on site at the rural clinic.

Committee discussion followed.

Ms. Amanda Smith, Executive Director, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), stated that even though DEQ does not have regulatory authority on tribal lands, it is a good resource for the people. She distributed fact sheets indicating program focus and issues for air quality, drinking water, radiation control, environmental response and remediation, solid and hazardous waste, and water quality. She explained DEQ's efforts for air quality in the Uintah Basin. She also addressed its efforts regarding energy issues.

Mr. Mark Maryboy, Navajo Tribe member, addressed the Committee regarding water quality. He requested that the Legislature work with Mr. Mike Styler to propose that the state allocate \$8 million toward a water settlement. He said that Navajo Oil and Gas company was created and continues to produce oil and noted the challenges created for air pollution. He expressed concern that the number of Utah members on the Navajo Nation Council are out numbered and out voted by those from Arizona.

Mr. Gary Hayes, Ute Mountain Ute Tribe, explained that the tribe provided data to the state regarding the uranium mill and their concerns with contaminated water and air. They are waiting for a response from the state.

Ms. Smith responded that the data that was submitted is going through DEQ's process, which takes time and is being challenged. She stated that an administrative law judge will be assigned to rule on the situation.

Committee discussion followed.

Mr. Gordon Walker, Director, Housing and Community Development, addressed the weatherization program and how it can help people in tribal areas. He explained the diagnostic evaluations done and the federal grant program and said that those living on and off the reservations are eligible. He related an event where a large group of youth traveled to Navajo Mountain and weatherized and made other improvements to 45 homes, resulting in a 33 percent reduction in energy costs to the residents.

Ms. Linda Hull, Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT), briefly reported on the McElmo Creek Bridge. She stated that the bridge is structurally sound and is considered to be in fair condition. She said that UDOT has increased the inspection frequency on that bridge. She reported that \$18 million has been spent in recent years on roads on tribal lands and discussed the fixed route transit system on the Navajo reservation. She reviewed a list of bridge and other repairs being done on tribal lands throughout the state.

Mr. Kenneth Maryboy, member of the Navajo Nation Commission, reviewed successful projects that have been completed. He also reviewed highways and roads that are in need of repair or replacement.

Ms. Melissa Zito, Utah Department of Health, updated the Committee regarding 2011 General Session S.B. 33 "Health Disparities and Related American Indian Programs" and the Department's efforts to develop strategies and policies to meet its goals of improving the health of Native Americans in Utah. She also addressed emergency preparedness efforts.

Mr. L. J. Godfrey, Director of external affairs in the western United States for AT&T, explained the possible merger between AT&T and T-Mobile and how that merger could impact Utah. He gave a slide presentation regarding communications technology on the reservations. He reviewed broadband technology and the applications that can be used in tribal and non-urban areas.

Mr. Jim McGutter, inquired about a potential partnership with some of the rural areas not being served.

Mr. Paul Tsosie, Chief of Staff to the United States Assistant Secretary-Indian Affairs, Larry Echo Hawk, encouraged the Committee to prioritize the most urgent needs of the tribes and determine the most effective ways to fill those needs. He offered his services in determining how to work together with the state.

Committee discussion followed.

**MOTION:** Rep. Wheatley moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Van Tassell adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.