

**MINUTES OF THE
NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE, AND ENVIRONMENT INTERIM COMMITTEE**
Wednesday, May 16, 2007 – 2:00 p.m. – Room W125 House Building

Members Present:

Rep. Roger E. Barrus, House Chair
Sen. Darin Peterson, Senate Chair
Sen. Gene Davis
Sen. Margaret Dayton
Sen. Dennis E. Stowell
Sen. Michael G. Waddoups
Rep. Sylvia S. Andersen
Rep. Melvin R. Brown
Rep. Glenn A. Donnelson
Rep. Carl W. Duckworth
Rep. Kerry Gibson
Rep. James R. Gowans
Rep. Neal Hendrickson

Rep. John G. Mathis
Rep. Michael E. Noel
Rep. Patrick L. Painter
Rep. Phil Riesen
Rep. Stephen E. Sandstrom
Rep. Richard W. Wheeler

Members Absent:

Rep. Jack R. Draxler

Staff Present:

Mr. J Brian Allred, Policy Analyst
Ms. Emily Brown, Associate General Counsel
Ms. Joy L. Miller, 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.le.utah.gov.

1. Committee Business

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

MOTION: Sen. Dayton moved to approve the minutes of the April 18, 2007 meeting. The motion passed unanimously. Rep. Sandstrom was absent for the vote.

2. Utah Snowpack Conditions

Mr. Randy Julander, Snow Survey Supervisor, Natural Resources Conservation Service, gave a presentation on the snowpack conditions throughout the state. He said that the entire state is less than 50 percent of average with the exception of the Beaver River Basin. Streamflow forecasts are estimated to be very much below average this year. He discussed statewide reservoir storage which is at about 75 percent of capacity.

3. Department of Environmental Quality

Ms. Dianne Nielson, Executive Director, DEQ (Department of Environmental Quality), distributed a copy of her presentation. She discussed the actions DEQ has taken to address and improve issues such as air and water quality, underground storage tanks, concentrated animal feeding operations, brownfields, and management of waste. It is estimated that DEQ will require ongoing funding of \$3 million for air quality planning and \$147,000 for mercury fish tissue sampling.

Mr. Walt Baker, Director, Division of Water Quality, explained that mercury accumulates biologically in the food chain. He said problems with mercury will be found in higher levels in bigger fish.

Mr. Rick Sprott, Director, Division of Air Quality, discussed what could be done to continue to clean up the air. He said the main issue is vehicle combustion. Vehicles and fuels have federal standards, which are just now going into effect. He said new cars in 2004 received new technology which is significantly

cleaner. Ultra low sulphur gasoline will not be available until 2010. This new fuel, when combined with the newer technology vehicles, will result in an 80 percent reduction in automobile pollution. A similar reduction will come with long haul diesel trucks. Refineries are already making ultra low sulphur diesel. He said they are trying to evaluate the results of those standards for Utah's environment.

4. Department of Agriculture and Food

Mr. Kyle Stephens, Deputy Commissioner, UDAF (Utah Department of Agriculture and Food), gave a presentation on the department. He reviewed the different divisions within UDAF and the programs they administer. He stated that agriculture education is considered one of UDAF's emerging issues. He said that there will be an increased need for food safety, animal/plant health, protection of the environment, and wise use of renewable resources. Mr. Stephens indicated that one of their future considerations is a new agriculture administration building. The building they currently occupy is one of the least energy efficient and least structurally sound facilities. He distributed a pamphlet "Utah Grazing Improvement Program."

Ms. Kathleen Clarke, Assistant Commissioner, UDAF, explained that she has been charged to help build greater connectivity between UDAF and other agencies of both state and federal government. She pointed out that two-thirds of Utah is owned and managed by the federal government. Ms. Clarke expressed the desire to help develop an appreciation and respect for the agriculture community and to foster partnerships and cooperation that will ensure the sustainability of that important industry.

5. Department of Natural Resources

Mr. Mike Styler, Executive Director, DNR (Department of Natural Resources), gave a presentation on the divisions within the DNR. He outlined the many ways in which the divisions are working together for the benefit of Utah's citizens. Mr. Styler distributed two booklets, "Utah Department of Natural Resources 2005/2006 Annual Report & Directory of Services" and "Partnerships for Success/The National Fire Plan."

MOTION: Rep. Painter moved to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Peterson adjourned the meeting at 4:25 p.m.