

INTERIM HIGHLIGHTS



Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel
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INTERIM LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS

Meetings were held June 18, 2008, or as noted.

Administrative Rules

(June 4, 2008)

STUDIES:

- Discussed the administrative rulemaking required to implement H.B. 354, "Appraisals for State Land Purposes" (2008) with the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration, the Department of Administrative Services, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Transportation.
- Discussed whether the State Board of Regents' proposed rule implementing S.B. 180, "Regents' Scholarship Program" (2008), complies with the intent of the legislation.
- Discussed whether the Division of Consumer Protection needs additional statutory authority to implement the intent of H.B. 192, "Property Transaction Amendments" (2008).

Chairs: Sen. Howard A. Stephenson / Rep. Ben C. Ferry

Staff: Art L. Hunsaker (analyst)/Susan Creager Allred (attorney)/Tracey Fredman (secretary)

Business and Labor

STUDIES:

- Received a presentation from the Helmets to Hardhats Program, which assists veterans in transitioning into employment in the construction industry.
- Studied issues related to approved apprenticeship programs of the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship.
- Received testimony from the Utah Health Policy Project regarding how reinsurance can be used as a risk management tool for health insurers.

REPORT:

- Received a report from the Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and Environmental Health on its activities and accomplishments and received recommendations on how the state, universities, and the center could improve workplace health and safety and contribute to economic growth and development in Utah and the surrounding region.

Chairs: Sen. Kevin T. Van Tassell / Rep. Stephen D. Clark

Staff: Allison M. Nicholson (analyst)/Patricia Owen (attorney)/Phalin L. Flowers (secretary)

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Education

STUDIES:

- The Utah State Office of Education provided data on the characteristics of students who passed and those who did not pass the Utah Basic Skills Competency Test in 2008.
- The Utah Foundation reported on how Utah compares to other states in education spending and services.
- Senator Margaret Dayton reported that a coalition of legislators, parents, mathematicians, and others has been formed to study mathematics education.
- The Utah State Office of Education discussed the math curriculum of Singapore, whose students are top performers on internationally administered math tests.
- The Utah Science and Technology Research Initiative (USTAR) gave a presentation describing research funded through USTAR and outreach activities to assist technology companies in Utah. USTAR is expected to create 73,000 high paying jobs, most of which will require college education.

Chairs: Sen. Howard A. Stephenson / Rep. Gregory H. Hughes

*Staff: Constance C. Steffen & Phillip V. Dean (analysts)/Dee S Larsen (attorney)
Glenda S. Whitney (secretary)*

Government Operations

REPORTS:

- Received a briefing from the State Capitol Preservation Board on construction projects and plans in the current long-range master plan for the Capitol Hill Complex. The work on the renovated capitol is expected to be completed in the next four months. Renovations on the East and West Buildings are expected to be completed in November.
- Received a briefing from the Lieutenant Governor's Office on potential changes to the Election Code.
- Received a report from the Office of State Debt Collection, indicating that \$284 million in outstanding receivables are owed to the state, and that the office is undertaking a pilot program and employer garnishment to collect certain debts.

ACTIONS:

- Requested that committee staff prepare standard language for per diem paid for state agency boards that are not currently using standardized language.

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- Requested that the Division of Finance provide recommendations for updating the per diem amounts.

Chairs: Sen. Peter C. Knudson / Rep. Douglas C. Aagard

Staff: Benjamin N. Christensen (analyst)/Eric N. Weeks (attorney)/Chelsea Barrett (secretary)

Health and Human Services

STUDY:

- Considered a proposal to develop community-based mental health services either in lieu of or in addition to replacing the pediatric facility for child and adolescent mental health services at the Utah State Hospital. The committee also received comments on this issue from the Department of Human Services, the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health, NAMI Utah, The Children's Center, and Allies with Families.

REPORTS:

- Received a report from the Department of Health on the extent of health care disparities in Utah.
- Received a report from the Utah Multicultural Health Network on promising practices and the impact of culturally and linguistically appropriate services, including interpretation services, on health care disparities.

Chairs: Sen. D. Chris Butters / Rep. Paul Ray

*Staff: Mark D. Andrews (analyst)/Catherine J. Dupont & Thomas R. Vaughn (attorneys)
Joy L. Miller (secretary)*

Health System Reform Task Force

(June 19, 2008)

STUDIES:

- Received a report from Senator Wayne L. Niederhauser, who has been meeting with members of the Utah business community to develop input for the task force.
- Received comments from the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce and the Utah Food Industry Association on health care reform.
- Received information from the Utah Department of Health on a proposed Medicaid 1115 waiver required by H.B. 133, "Health System Reform" (2008), the potential use of Medicaid health opportunity accounts, the use of medical homes by Medicaid, and efforts to reduce inappropriate emergency department use by Medicaid clients.
- Received a report from Representative James A. Dunnigan, who has been meeting with members of the health insurance community to develop a response to draft legislation considered at the last meeting that is intended to increase the transparency of health insurance plans and carrier information.
- Received a demonstration from Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah regarding the type of insurance plan and consumer information available on its web site.

Chairs: Sen. Sheldon L. Killpack / Rep. David Clark

*Staff: Mark D. Andrews (analyst)/Catherine J. Dupont (attorney)
Phalin L. Flowers (secretary)*

Higher Education and Applied Technology Governance

(May 27, 2008)

STUDY:

- Received comments from Utah Valley State College, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education, the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst, and the Utah College of Applied Technology regarding emerging issues related to the delivery of career and technical education (CTE), including differing definitions of CTE, role and mission of institutions providing CTE, credit and degrees, costs, and governance.

Chairs: Sen. Curtis S. Bramble / Rep. Kevin S. Garn

Staff: Allison M. Nicholson (analyst)/Dee S Larsen (attorney)/Wendy L. Bangerter (secretary)

Immigration

(June 19, 2008)

REPORTS:

- Received a presentation from the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake and Catholic Church representatives from Logan, Utah regarding the views of the church on immigration issues.
- Received a presentation from representatives of the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce on the objectives and activities of the chamber's Immigration Task Force.
- Received a presentation from the Utah Office of Ethnic Affairs on its responsibilities.
- Received a presentation from representatives of the ethnic communities in the Logan area regarding the impact of immigration issues on these communities.
- Received a presentation from Swift & Company on the impact of immigration issues, including illegal immigration enforcement, on the company and the business community.

(The committee meeting was held in Logan, Utah)

Chair: Sen. Scott K. Jenkins / Rep. Brad L. Dee

Staff: Art L. Hunsaker (analyst)/Christopher R. Parker & Thomas R. Vaughn & James L. Wilson (attorneys)/Chelsea Barrett (secretary)

Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice

STUDIES:

- Reviewed statistics regarding illegal immigrants in Utah's prisons and jails and also roles of the Utah Department of Corrections, the Utah Board of Pardons and Parole, and the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in identifying and processing illegal immigrants who are held in our prisons and jails.
- Discussed issues regarding Utah's Concealed Firearm Permit Program, including costs, reciprocity with other states, and availability of background check information.

Chairs: Sen. Jon J. Greiner / Rep. DeMar "Bud" Bowman

*Staff: Stewart E. Smith (analyst)/Susan Creager Allred (attorney)
Wendy L. Bangerter (secretary)*

Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment

REPORTS:

- Received a report from the Division of Oil, Gas, and Mining on the division's role in fostering and regulating energy development in the state.
- Received a report from the Utah Science Technology and Research Initiative on energy development technologies.
- Received a report from the U.S. Department of Energy and NextGen Energy Council on clean coal technologies.

ACTIONS:

- Recommended that the Legislature move forward in organizing a local seminar, facilitated by the Copenhagen Consensus Center, to analyze energy resource development opportunities in the Intermountain area.
- Requested that committee staff prepare legislation to remove repeal dates relating to surface coal mining permit applications and revegetation requirements.
- Discussed recodification of Department of Natural Resources sections of the Utah Code and recommended changes relating to policy board members.

*Chairs: Sen. Darin G. Peterson / Rep. Roger E. Barrus
Staff: J Brian Allred (analyst)/Emily R. Brown (attorney)/Joy L. Miller (secretary)*

Political Subdivisions

STUDIES:

- Received an overview of the affordable housing issue from the Utah Division of Housing and Community Development within the Utah Department of Community and Culture.
- Received presentations from legislators:
 - Senator Mark B. Madsen discussed disclosure of regulatory costs of housing as proposed in S.B. 86, "Economic Analysis and Reporting of Cost of Land Use Regulation" (introduced 2008);
 - Senator Karen Mayne discussed the preservation of mobile and manufactured home parks as encouraged by H.J.R. 2, "Resolution Encouraging Manufactured and Mobile Home Parks as Affordable" (enacted 2008); and
 - Representative Christopher N. Herrod discussed ways for the state to encourage zoning which invites the development of a wide range of housing choices.

*Chairs: Sen. Dennis E. Stowell / Rep. Fred R Hunsaker
Staff: Joseph T. Wade (analyst)/Robert H. Rees (attorney)/Wendy L. Bangerter (secretary)*

Public Utilities and Technology

REPORTS:

- Received comments from citizen groups and locally elected officials in Box Elder County regarding their communities' role in siting utility transmission corridors for the high voltage (345kV) Ben Lomond transmission line through ten cities in Box Elder County.

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- Received comments from Rocky Mountain Power regarding the siting requirements and the process it followed in siting this transmission corridor.
- Received a report from the governor's energy advisor about the Western Climate Initiative's proposed greenhouse gas (GHG) emission regional "cap and trade" program and an inventory of Utah GHG emissions. The proposal also includes targets and a timeline for the reduction of GHG.

*Chairs: Sen. Scott K. Jenkins / Rep. Michael E. Noel
Staff: Richard C. North (analyst)/Christopher R. Parker (attorney)/Tracey Fredman (secretary)*

Revenue and Taxation

(June 5, 2008)

STUDIES:

- Received a committee staff report reviewing all statutorily authorized property tax levies, range of rates for each levy, and the number of taxing entities imposing these levies.
- Received a report from the Utah State Tax Commission on the truth in taxation rate setting process, including a review of how the certified rate is calculated, the taxpayer notice, and newspaper advertising requirements.
- Received a staff report on property taxes and school funding equalization, including a review of the differences in property tax base per student and state policies that attempt to equalize funding on a statewide basis.

(June 18, 2008)

STUDIES:

- Received information from the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association on the implementation and effects of the California Constitution's Proposition 13 that limits property taxes.
- Received testimony on alternative appraisal approaches for determining fair market value.

REPORT:

- Received a report from South Jordan City regarding an explanatory advertisement that the city published last year in conjunction with a newspaper advertisement required under the state's truth in taxation law.

*Chairs: Sen. Wayne L. Niederhauser / Rep. John Dougall
Staff: Bryant R. Howe & Phillip V. Dean (analysts)/Rebecca L. Rockwell & Angela D. Oakes (attorneys)/Phalin L. Flowers (secretary)*

Transportation

STUDIES:

- Discussed the effect of the federal "REAL ID Act of 2005" on law enforcement in Utah.
- Received presentations from the Utah Department of Transportation regarding efforts to mitigate traffic in construction areas and the condition of and preservation of state highway pavements and bridges.

REPORT:

- Received a report from the Department of Transportation on proposed additions to and deletions from the state highway system.

*Chairs: Sen. Carlene M. Walker / Rep. Todd E. Kiser
Staff: Leif G. Elder (analyst)/Shannon C. Halverson (attorney)
Tracey Fredman (secretary)*

Utah Tax Review Commission

(June 12, 2008)

STUDIES:

- Received a presentation from Questar Corporation on its natural gas production activities in Utah and surrounding states.
- Received information from the Utah Taxpayers Association on congestion pricing as a funding source for new highways.

REPORTS:

- Received a committee staff report providing background information on the state severance tax on oil and gas, including a review of revenue trends, sources of revenue, and information on production and exploration.
- Received a committee staff report on sources and amounts of funding for highway construction and maintenance, and for mass transit.

Chairs: Mr. M. Keith Prescott / Mr. David J. Crapo
Staff: Bryant R. Howe & Phillip V. Dean & Leif G. Elder (analysts)
Rebecca L. Rockwell & Angela D. Oakes (attorneys)
Phalin L. Flowers (secretary)

Workforce Services & Community and Economic Development

STUDIES:

- Received a presentation on affordable housing from the Division of Community Development and discussed ways to meet the demand for affordable housing.
- Received a presentation from the Department of Workforce Services and the Governor's Office of Economic Development on training Utah's workforce to fill available jobs and discussed ways the state can address this need.

REPORTS:

- Received an update on the efforts of the Department of Workforce Services to reduce the threat of identity theft and implementation of S.B. 15, "Workforce Services - Reporting Misuse of Personal Identifying Information" (2007).
- Received an update on the state's refugee services, including the creation of the Refugee Services Office in the Department of Workforce Services.

Chairs: Sen. Mark B. Madsen / Rep. Steven R. Mascaró
Staff: Arthur L. Hunsaker (analyst)/James L. Wilson (attorney)/Glenda S. Whitney (secretary)

Next Interim Day – August 20

Editors: Susan Creager Allred & Stewart E. Smith
Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel

For more information about legislative activities, visit the Utah State Legislature's website at www.leg.utah.gov.

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