

**MINUTES  
of the  
SIXTH MEETING  
of the  
INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**November 28, 2023  
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center  
Silver and Turquoise Room  
2401 12th Street NW  
Albuquerque**

**November 29, 2023  
Pueblo of Isleta  
Isleta Golf Club  
4001 New Mexico Highway 47 SE  
Albuquerque**

**November 30, 2023  
State Capitol, Room 322  
Santa Fe**

The sixth meeting of the Indian Affairs Committee was called to order by Senator Shannon D. Pinto, vice chair, at 9:52 a.m. on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, in the Silver and Turquoise Room of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC) in Albuquerque.

**Present**

Rep. D. Wonda Johnson, Chair (11/29, 11/30)  
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto, Vice Chair  
Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon  
Rep. Anthony Allison  
Rep. John Block  
Rep. Tara Jaramillo (11/29)  
Rep. Charlotte Little  
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle (11/29)  
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez (11/29, 11/30)  
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero (11/28, 11/29)  
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez (11/28)  
Sen. Benny Shendo, Jr.

**Advisory Members**

Rep. Harry Garcia (11/29, 11/30)  
Sen. Linda M. López (11/28)  
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom (11/28, 11/29)

**Absent**

Sen. Brenda G. McKenna  
Sen. Bill B. O'Neill  
Sen. William E. Sharer  
Rep. Martin R. Zamora

Rep. Gail Chasey  
Rep. Derrick J. Lente  
Sen. Michael Padilla  
Sen. William P. Soules  
Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson

(Attendance dates are noted for those members not present for the entire meeting.)

## **Staff**

Lenaya Montoya, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)

Markela Clinton, Committee Coordinator, LCS

Nicole Waguespack, Researcher, LCS

Angela Dakan, Staff, LCS

## **Minutes Approval**

Because the committee will not meet again this interim, the minutes for this meeting have not been officially approved by the committee.

## **Guests**

The guest list is in the meeting file.

## **Handouts**

Handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file and posted on the legislature's website.

## **References to Webcast**

The time reference noted next to each agenda item in this document is cross-referenced to the webcast of the committee meeting, which can be found at [www.nmlegis.gov](http://www.nmlegis.gov), under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and committee discussions for agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

## **Tuesday, November 28 — Albuquerque**

### **Welcome and Introductions (9:52 a.m.)**

Senator Pinto welcomed everyone, and members of the audience, committee and staff introduced themselves.

### **Welcome and Status Update (9:58 a.m.)**

Mike Canfield, president and chief executive officer, IPCC and Indian Pueblos Marketing, Inc. (IPMI), and Monique Fragua, chief operating officer, IPCC and IPMI, discussed the IPCC's mission and impact on the community. Ms. Fragua highlighted the center's programming, including a cultural dance program, living cultural museum exhibits and an entrepreneurial complex. She also highlighted the center's security force, which provides 24-hour patrol and monitoring. Mr. Canfield discussed how the campus is currently developing property and future development and property acquisition projects. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20112823%20Item%201%20Welcome%20and%20Status%20Update.pdf>.

### **Report on the Senator John Pinto Memorial Filmmakers Fund (11:14 a.m.)**

Rochelle Bussey, senior program manager, New Mexico Film Division, Economic Development Department, provided an overview of film production spending in the state, awards and accolades received by Native American filmmakers and content creators, tribal film liaisons,

workforce development and the 20 grant recipients of the Senator John Pinto Memorial Filmmakers Fund for Native filmmakers, who each received \$5,000 grants. Steven Tallas, Navajo filmmaker, and fellow, Native American Media Alliance, spoke about how life on a reservation inspired his film *Rez Dogs* and opportunities the film has opened up for him and local actors. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20112823%20Item%202%20-%20The%20Film%20Industry%20in%20New%20Mexico%20and%20Related%20Native%20and%20Indigenous%20Initiatives%20and%20Updates.pdf>.

#### **Update on the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Relatives (MMIWR) Task Force (12:20 p.m.)**

James R. Mountain, secretary-designate, Indian Affairs Department (IAD), and Josett D. Monette, deputy secretary and general counsel, IAD, discussed the short-term education and outreach objectives that are in progress at the IAD to address the MMIWR crisis. They announced that the department plans to establish an advisory council to help guide the work of the IAD and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) in enacting the state response plan that was put together by the MMIWR task force and that the IAD and DPS will host the second annual "Missing in New Mexico Day" on December 3, 2023 in Albuquerque. They also discussed data collection and updating the IAD website with an MMIWR dashboard. James Grayson, chief deputy attorney general, Office of the Attorney General, spoke briefly about what the office's missing indigenous persons specialist is doing to coordinate with local and federal law enforcement agencies. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20112823%20Item%203%20Update%20on%20the%20MMIWR%20Task%20Force.pdf>.

#### **Public Comment (2:03 p.m.)**

A list of individuals who made public comment is available in the meeting file.

#### **Update from the IAD (3:01 p.m.)**

Mr. Mountain and Ms. Monette gave an update on the department's active capital outlay and Tribal Infrastructure Project Fund projects, intergovernmental agreements and IAD staff demographics and vacancy rate. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20112823%20Item%204%20Update%20from%20the%20IAD.pdf>.

#### **Update from the League of Women Voters of New Mexico (LWVNM) (3:44 p.m.)**

Dick Mason, director, Voting and Elections, LWVNM; the Honorable Edward L. Chávez, former justice and chief justice (retired), New Mexico Supreme Court, and chair, Citizen Redistricting Committee; and Representative Kathleen Cates discussed the need for and importance of a redistricting commission that is independent and represents the state's population geographically and demographically. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=11/28/2023&ItemNumber=5>.

**Public Comment (4:45 p.m.)**

A list of individuals who made public comment is available in the meeting file.

**Recess**

The meeting recessed at 5:14 p.m.

**Wednesday, November 29 — Pueblo of Isleta**

**Reconvene**

The meeting reconvened at 10:12 a.m.

**Welcome and Status Update (10:13 a.m.)**

Eugene Jiron, first lieutenant governor, Pueblo of Isleta, and Juan Rey Abeita, second lieutenant governor, Pueblo of Isleta, discussed infrastructure funding priorities for Isleta Village Proper, the renovation and preservation of which is estimated to cost \$52 million. Lieutenant Governor Abeita discussed the pueblo's support of a bill to create a dedicated fund to assist tribes with the cost-matching obligations of grant funding and a bill to authorize cross-commissioning of law enforcement officers on a statewide level. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20112823%20Item%206%20Isleta%20Pueblo%20presentation.pdf>.

**Approval of Minutes (11:27 a.m.)**

Upon a motion made and seconded, and without opposition, the committee approved the minutes of the September 25-26, 2023 and October 18-20, 2023 meetings.

**Tribal and County Health Councils (11:27 a.m.)**

Gerilyn Antonio, tribal liaison, New Mexico Alliance of Health Councils (NMAHC); Valeria Alarcón, executive director, NMAHC; and Anthony Yepa, tribal member, Board of Directors, NMAHC, discussed how state-mandated county and tribal health councils advance health equity by identifying and addressing local health needs and are instrumental in the proper functioning of New Mexico's public health system. They discussed concerns about a majority of existing councils being dissolved in 2024 because of lack of funding and how that could impact public health. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20112823%20Item%207%20NMAHC%20presentation.pdf>.

**Tour of the Pueblo of Isleta (12:15 p.m.)**

Due to an opening in the day's agenda, members of the committee and staff received a brief tour of the Pueblo of Isleta, including the historic Village Proper, assisted living facility, veterans' center and road projects.

### **Veterans' Services in Tribal Communities (2:02 p.m.)**

Brigadier General Jamison A. Herrera, acting secretary, Veterans' Services Department (VSD), and Beverly Charley, tribal liaison, VSD, discussed the Native American veteran population in the state, how the VSD addresses the needs and concerns of Native American veterans and department collaboration with Indian nations, tribes and pueblos and state agencies on conferences, resource fairs and support for veterans with state and federal benefit claims processes. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%2012823%20Item%209%20Veterans'%20Services%20in%20Tribal%20Communities.pdf>.

### **Housing Issues on Tribal Lands (3:28 p.m.)**

Winter Torres, executive director, New Mexico Eviction Prevention and Diversion Program, discussed the complicated nature of Native American housing issues and the need for a specialized division in state government that could support the state's Indian nations, tribes and pueblos with accessing funding resources, administrating housing projects and navigating housing regulations. Roger Valdez, strategic advisor, Office of Equity and Inclusion, City of Albuquerque, discussed urban housing issues among Native Americans, the widening gap between Black and Native and white homeownership and how "redlining" is still in practice today through the use of personal credit scores in home-loan qualification. Randy John, street outreach coordinator, City of Albuquerque, explained why many Native Americans end up homeless in urban areas like Albuquerque and how the support of city services could help to overcome the unique challenges encountered when Native Americans move from rural to urban communities. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=11/28/2023&ItemNumber=10>.

### **Public Comment (4:30 p.m.)**

A list of individuals who made public comment is available in the meeting file.

### **Recess**

The meeting recessed at 4:33 p.m.

### **Thursday, November 30 — Santa Fe**

### **Reconvene**

The meeting reconvened at 11:14 a.m.

### **Update from the Navajo Nation (11:16 a.m.)**

Yolanda Azua, administrative assistant, Navajo Nation, discussed the Hozho Center, a peer-run wellness and information center in Gallup. Stephen B. Etsitty, executive director, Navajo Environmental Protection Agency, Navajo Nation, discussed current efforts and actions needed to clean up high-priority abandoned mine sites on and near Navajo lands. Arvin Trujillo, executive administrator and senior advisor to the president, Navajo Nation, discussed the challenges of job losses from energy sector transitions, lack of infrastructure and diversification

of the economy in the Four Corners region. Arbin Mitchell, director, Community Development Division, Navajo Nation, discussed priority capital outlay projects and the importance of having a comprehensive plan before project funds are released. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=11/28/2023&ItemNumber=11>.

**Presentation on the Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative (12:34 p.m.)**

Heidi Todacheene, senior advisor to the secretary, Office of the Secretary, United States Department of the Interior (US DOI), discussed volume one of an investigative report prescribed by the US DOI's Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative, which is the first-ever investigation of the Indian boarding school system in the United States. She explained that volume one includes the first official listing of the 408 federal Indian boarding school sites, the role of religious organizations in the depletion of Indian trust funds in accordance with their support and operation of more than half of the schools and the shameful implications of the cultural assimilation and land dispossession policies of the federal government.

**Update on House Bill (HB) 280 (2023): Technical Assistance Centers (1:38 p.m.)**

Nathan Moquino, director, Indian Education Division and tribal liaison, Higher Education Department (HED); Desiree Aguilar, education administrator, HED; and Patricia Trujillo, Ph.D., acting secretary, HED, provided an update on actions taken by the HED to establish two American Indian education technical assistance centers pursuant to HB 280 in the months since its passage during the 2023 legislative session. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20112823%20Item%2013%20Tribal%20Education%20Technical%20Assistance%20Centers.pdf>.

**Consideration of Legislation for Endorsement (2:18 p.m.)**

Representative Lente presented on a bill to create the Tribal Education Trust Fund and a bill to change distributions from the Indian Education Fund. On a motion made and seconded, and with one amendment, the committee voted to endorse both bills.

Christie Abeyta, superintendent, Santa Fe Indian School (SFIS), and Mark Duran, lobbyist, SFIS, requested \$3.5 million to build and equip an information technology facility at the SFIS. On a motion made and seconded, and without opposition, the committee voted in favor of the request.

Representative Joanne J. Ferrary; Sindy Bolaños-Sacoman, director, New Mexico Tribal Behavioral Health Providers Association; and Shelley Mann-Lev, public health advocate, Alcohol Harms Alleviation Coalition, gave a presentation in favor of raising the liquor excise tax, though a draft bill was not yet available.

Senator Pinto; Cherylin Atcitty, interim director, Indian Resource Development, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences, New Mexico State University (NMSU),

and Clayton Abbey, assistant vice president, Office of Government and Community Relations, NMSU, gave a presentation in favor of repealing the Indian Resources Development Act and creating the Indian Resources Development Program at NMSU, though a draft bill was not yet available.

Ms. Alarcón discussed a \$6.6 million funding bill for county and tribal health councils across the state. On a motion made and seconded, and without opposition, the committee voted to endorse the bill.

Representative Block discussed a bill relating to the recruitment and retention of Indian foster families and a memorial requesting a study of the economic impact of Indian nations, tribes and pueblos on the state economy. The committee did not endorse either piece of legislation but moved to keep each as a draft for further committee discussion.

A list of bills endorsed by the committee can be found here:

[https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/endorsed\\_legislation?CommitteeCode=IAC&Year=2023](https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/endorsed_legislation?CommitteeCode=IAC&Year=2023).

#### **Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **Adjournment**

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 5:08 p.m.