

MINUTES
of the
FOURTH MEETING
of the
INDIAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

September 25-26, 2023
State Capitol, Room 309
Santa Fe

The fourth meeting of the Indian Affairs Committee was called to order by Representative D. Wonda Johnson, chair, at 10:14 a.m. on September 25, 2023 in Room 309 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe.

Present

Rep. D. Wonda Johnson, Chair
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto, Vice Chair
Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Rep. Anthony Allison
Rep. John Block
Rep. Charlotte Little
Sen. Bill B. O'Neill
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez
Sen. Benny Shendo, Jr.
Rep. Martin R. Zamora

Absent

Rep. Tara Jaramillo
Sen. Brenda G. McKenna
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez
Sen. William E. Sharer

Advisory Members

Rep. Gail Chasey (9/26)
Rep. Harry Garcia
Sen. Linda M. Lopez

Sen. Stuart Ingle
Rep. Derrick J. Lente
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom
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

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, under the "Webcast" tab. The presentations made and committee discussions for agenda items can be found on the recorded webcast for this meeting.

Monday, September 25

Welcome and Introductions (10:14 a.m.)

Representative Johnson welcomed everyone, and members of the committee and staff introduced themselves.

Presentation from Invenergy (10:19 a.m.)

William Consuegra, director, Transmission Development, Invenergy, and Mayane Barudin, senior manager, Transmission Community Partnerships, discussed the proposed New Mexico North Path, an estimated \$2 billion project under a public-private partnership with the New Mexico Renewable Energy Transmission Authority. They explained the project as a 400-mile-long, high-voltage, direct current transmission line that would bring wind and solar energy generated in Union County to utilities servicing San Juan County and the Four Corners region. They discussed the proposed transmission route, converter stations and potential economic impacts of the project and what they are doing to engage local communities in the nine counties through which the transmission line will pass. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20092523%20Item%201%20NM%20North%20Path%20Transmission%20Project%20Overview%20Invenergy.pdf>.

Update from Indigenous Women Rising (IWR) (11:38 a.m.)

Jonnette Paddy, abortion fund director, IWR; Justin Lorenzo, emergence fund director, IWR; and Jennifer Lim, communications and media director, IWR, explained the IWR's structure and its mission to advocate for equitable and culturally significant health options for Indigenous women and families through education, resources and advocacy. They discussed funding sources and how funds are spent within the organization, which has seen an increase in clients served from 58 in 2020 to 600 in 2022. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=9/25/2023&ItemNumber=2>.

Approval of Minutes (12:15 p.m.)

On a motion duly made and seconded and without opposition, the minutes of the July 13-14, 2023 and August 10-11, 2023 meetings were approved.

Update from Gallup Public Library (1:35 p.m.)

Tammi Moe, director, Octavia Fellin Public Library (OFPL), Rex Museum and El Morro Theatre, spoke about her different roles within the City of Gallup and her international perspective on archiving and museums. She discussed the history of the OFPL, which is more than 100 years old, and the economic development and educational and cultural enrichment that it offers. She advocated for the OFPL and its need for a new building that is compliant with the federal Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, energy efficient and large enough to handle and expand the services it provides. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=9/25/2023&ItemNumber=3>.

Update on the Gallup Intertribal Indian Ceremonial (2:33 p.m.)

Kyle Tom, president, Gallup Inter-Tribal Indian Ceremonial Association, gave an overview of how the ceremonial went this year. He gave statistics on the association's advertising campaigns and said that the ceremonial is gaining in popularity, as evidenced by a growth in the number of participants in and attendees of all of the events, as well as traffic to the association's website and social media pages. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20092523%20Item%204%20Gallup%20Inter-Tribal%20Indian%20Ceremonial%202023%20Report.pdf>.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Recess

The meeting recessed at 3:14 p.m.

Tuesday, September 26**Reconvene**

The meeting reconvened at 9:20 a.m.

Update on Energy Transition Act (9:23 a.m.)

James R. Mountain, secretary designee, Indian Affairs Department (IAD); Josett Monette, deputy secretary and general counsel, IAD; and Carnely Gauna, tribal consultation specialist, IAD, gave a presentation on the IAD's 2024 initiatives and priorities, which include reviewing compliance with its procurement policy and addressing behavioral health and suicide prevention, and how consultation with the state's Indian nations, tribes and pueblos will improve now that it has a dedicated, funded staff position for that. Mr. Mountain said that the department has scheduled a meeting with the Office of the Attorney General and Department of Public Safety to discuss development of a dedicated bureau to implement the Missing and Murdered

Indigenous Women and Relatives Task Force's recommendations, and he asked for funding to begin that process. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20092523%20Item%205%20Update%20on%20Energy%20Transition%20Act.pdf>.

Update from Navajo Preparatory School (10:25 a.m.)

Shawna Becenti, head of school, Navajo Preparatory School, gave an overview of the school's history and mission and talked about the school's current needs, which include updates and additions to student housing and other infrastructure improvements. She stated that the per-pupil funding for the school is less than that for other New Mexico students and the state funding formula should also include federal Bureau of Indian Education-funded schools. Sherrick Roanhorse, vice president, Board of Trustees, Navajo Preparatory School, said that he is happy with the vision and team the school has in place to encourage Native American students to succeed and give back to their communities. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20092523%20Item%206%20Update%20from%20Navajo%20Preparatory%20School.pdf>.

Presentation on Tribal Roads, Maintenance and Rights of Way (11:23 a.m.)

Ricky Serna, secretary, Department of Transportation (DOT); Lisa Vega, P.E., district 6 engineer, DOT; and Paul Brasher, P.E., district 5 engineer, DOT, discussed the department's funding sources, collaboration with tribal governments and funding for maintenance of tribal infrastructure and gave updates on the ongoing and planned construction projects on or near tribal lands. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20092523%20Item%207%20Tribal%20Roads,%20Maintenance%20and%20Rights%20of%20Way.pdf>.

Presentation on Northwest Teacher Education Program Certification (1:27 p.m.)

Charles Roessel, Ed.D., president, Diné College, gave a brief overview of Diné College, including data points, statistics and degrees offered. He said that the main focus of the college is research, and its Northwest Teacher Education Program, with its emphasis on multicultural and linguistically relevant education, was created in response to the *Yazzie/Martinez* lawsuit. Kimberly Dominguez, director, Northwest Teacher Education Program, Diné College, discussed the program, which focuses on training current and future teachers and teacher aides, partnering with high schools for dual-credit classes and fast-tracking students to bachelor of arts programs. The presentation can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/handouts/IAC%20092523%20Item%208%20Presentation%20on%20Northwest%20Teacher%20Education%20Program%20Certification.pdf>.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 2:54 p.m.