

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

**September 4, 2024
20885 Frontage Road, Exit 102
Interstate 10
Akela Flats**

**September 5, 2024
Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine
3501 Arrowhead Drive, Room 208
Las Cruces**

**September 6, 2024
New Mexico State University
Corbett Center Student Union, East Ballroom, Room 320
Las Cruces**

The third meeting of the Indian Affairs Committee was called to order by Senator Shannon D. Pinto, vice chair, on Wednesday, September 4, 2024, at 10:08 a.m. at the Fort Sill Apache Tribe facility in Akela Flats.

Present

Rep. D. Wonda Johnson, Chair
Sen. Shannon D. Pinto, Vice Chair
Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Rep. John Block
Rep. Charlotte Little
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez
Rep. Patricia Roybal Caballero
Rep. Martin R. Zamora

Absent

Rep. Anthony Allison
Rep. Tara Jaramillo
Sen. Linda M. López
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle
Sen. Joshua A. Sanchez
Sen. Benny Shendo, Jr.

Advisory Members

Rep. Gail Chasey
Rep. Harry Garcia
Rep. Derrick J. Lente
Rep. Patricia A. Lundstrom
Sen. Brenda G. McKenna
Sen. Bill B. O'Neill
Sen. Michael Padilla
Sen. William E. Sharer
Sen. William P. Soules
Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson

Guest Legislators

Rep. Jenifer Jones (9/4)

Rep. Luis M. Terrazas (9/4)

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

Staff

Nicole Waguespack, Researcher, Legislative Council Service (LCS)

Paul Estok, Staff Attorney, LCS

Sheila Keleher, Researcher, 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.

Wednesday, September 4 — Akela Flats

Welcome and Introductions (10:08 a.m.)

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

Welcome and Status Update (10:20 a.m.)

Jennifer M. Heminokeky, chair, Fort Sill Apache Tribe, and Naomi Hartford, tribal cultural coordinator, Fort Sill Apache Tribe, welcomed the committee and discussed initiatives, projects and 2025 legislative priorities. Ms. Heminokeky noted that the tribe has acquired 1,800 additional acres of land and hopes to develop that land with housing and other facilities. Ms. Hartford gave a brief summary of the tribe's history and efforts to educate the public about the tribe.

An Update from Luna County (11:27 a.m.)

Chris Brice, county manager, Luna County, gave an overview and update on where Luna County stands in its relations with the Fort Sill Apache Tribe, and he placed special emphasis on joint efforts relating to public safety.

Approval of Minutes (1:42 p.m.)

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, and without any objections, the committee approved the minutes of the July 31-August 2, 2024 meeting.

An Update from the Indian Resources Development (IRD) Program (1:43 p.m.)

Cherylin Atcitty, interim director, IRD Program, New Mexico State University (NMSU), explained her background and how her cultural connection aids her in her duties with the IRD program and its mission. Ms. Atcitty detailed the current activities of the IRD program in preparing New Mexico Native American students to contribute to development and management of tribal resources in agriculture, natural resources, engineering and business. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=9/4/2024&ItemNumber=4>.

Public Comment (2:27 p.m.)

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

Recess

The meeting recessed at 2:34 p.m.

Tour of the Historic Luna County Courthouse

Thursday, September 5 — Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine, Las Cruces

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:38 a.m.

Welcome and Status Update (9:38 a.m.)

Nina Nunez, vice president, Institutional Effectiveness, and chief of staff, Burrell College of Osteopathic Medicine, provided an overview of the operations of the college along with a review of the types of courses that are required, how the college seeks to produce graduates who will choose to practice medicine in New Mexico and how appreciative the college is of the legislative support it has received.

League of Women Voters of New Mexico (LWVNM) Update (10:21 a.m.)

Hannah Burling, co-president, LWVNM, reviewed the general activities of the LWVNM in the state, with special emphasis on communicating with voters regarding candidates and issues in upcoming elections. Ms. Burling also noted that the LWVNM is working to combat voter suppression in the state. Dick Mason, member, Board of Directors, LWVNM, reviewed LWVNM efforts to bring forward a constitutional amendment creating an independent redistricting commission in the state. Leonard Gorman, the executive director, Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission, gave an overview of past and current efforts by the commission to ensure Navajo participation in redistricting as well as efforts to promote Navajo participation in

elections. Cedric Page, treasurer, Santa Fe Chapter, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), briefly described NAACP interest in the fair redistricting proposal and asked legislators to give serious thought to supporting an independent redistricting commission. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=9/4/2024&ItemNumber=6>.

New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA) Update (11:40 a.m.)

Sally Marquez, executive director, NMAA, provided an overview of the NMAA as the organization that serves 14 sports and 24 activities for more than 50,000 students in the state. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=9/4/2024&ItemNumber=7>.

Update from Native American Voters Alliance (NAEVA) (1:32 p.m.)

Representative Little explained that she would be filling in as a speaker for Ahtza Dawn Chavez, executive director, NAEVA. Representative Little briefly outlined the primary goal of the organization as enfranchisement by working as an organizer for voting rights. Joseph Little, attorney, noted that the NAEVA works as a provider of information, and he told committee members that the wide dispersment of Native Americans in New Mexico makes the work of communicating voting information of great importance.

An Overview of State Policy and Tribal Energy Development (2:05 p.m.)

Mayane Chavez Barudin, executive director and founder, Sovereign Energy, and Marissa Naranjo, deputy director, Sovereign Energy, presented on the history of Sovereign Energy and the current climate of tribal energy development across the state. The speakers highlighted Sovereign Energy's mission to build the individual and collective power of Native American nations, tribes and pueblos to lead the way toward a just, interdependent and sustainable energy future. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=9/4/2024&ItemNumber=9>.

Public Comment (2:56 p.m.)

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

Recess

The meeting recessed at 3:07 p.m.

Friday, September 6 — NMSU, Las Cruces

Reconvene

The meeting reconvened at 9:53 a.m.

Welcome and Status Update (9:53 a.m.)

Teresa Maria "Linda" Scholz, Ph.D., vice president, Equity, Inclusion and Diversity, NMSU; Georgina Badoni, Ph.D., assistant professor, Native American Studies, NMSU; and Michael Ray, director, American Indian Programs, NMSU, detailed NMSU's commitment to meaningful engagement and continued relationship building with tribal communities in the state. Shiyazh Pete, student athlete, NMSU, presented a video of his journey as a Navajo student coming to NMSU and finding assistance and community to help him grow and blossom as a student and person. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=9/4/2024&ItemNumber=10>.

Workforce Solutions Department (WSD) Energy Transition Act Update (10:56 a.m.)

Sarita Nair, secretary, WSD, gave an update, including statistical data, on the implementation of the Energy Transition Act as well as challenges going into the future. She described other initiatives that are being planned. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=9/4/2024&ItemNumber=11>.

Connect New Mexico Office of Broadband Access and Expansion (OBAE) Broadband on Tribal Lands (11:31 a.m.)

Drew Lovelace, acting director, OBAE; L. Stephine Poston, tribal support, OBAE; and Victory Quintana, broadband tribal coordinator, OBAE, reviewed the activities, challenges and pitfalls encountered in expanding broadband access across the state, particularly to Native American nations, tribes and pueblos. The presentation materials can be found here:

<https://www.nmlegis.gov/Committee/Handouts?CommitteeCode=IAC&Date=9/4/2024&ItemNumber=12>.

Adjournment

There being no further business before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 12:12 p.m.