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GENERAL SESSION

February 9, 2011

Program Topic: Public Land Access and Use

Presented by: *Energy/Natural Resources/Agriculture & Environment*

Director: Kari Malkovich

Co-Chairs: Hilarie Orman & Linda Watters

Speakers: Juan Palma – Director, Bureau of Land Management

**Dan Mayhew – Conservation Chair,
Utah Chapter of The Sierra Club**

Mary Tullius – Director, Utah State Parks and Recreation

**Peter Donner – Senior Economist,
Governor's Office of Planning and Budget**

Rep. Mike Noel (R) Dist. 73; Kane County

Juan Palma said The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages over 2 million acres of public lands in Utah, representing about 42% of the state. A new BLM office has just opened in Fillmore and another is forthcoming in Kanab. Also, a much-needed 200-bed jail will be built on BLM land. To help facilitate its construction, the land patent was transferred to the sheriff's office in order to receive a federal grant.

A state's vigorous land use portfolio includes a variety of elements. Tourism makes a significant contribution, directly and indirectly, to our state's economic stability and growth. Much of Utah's power comes from power plants and transmission lines spanning BLM lands. Our natural resources include gas and oil reserves

that must be wisely managed. Utah currently has 25 drilling rigs in operation.

Estimates indicate the Uinta Basin could have 20,000 new wells poised to open within the next 50 years. Responsible extraction methods should be employed to mitigate adverse effects on air and water, as well as the land itself. Mr. Palma stressed the BLM's continuing sensitivity to the need for balance between robust economic development and protection of Utah's natural endowments.

Responding to questions, Mr. Palma said extraction projects create jobs and also support the existing businesses that serve them. Utah benefits from our oil and natural gas reserves in that the BLM leases land parcels for which

counties and the state receive royalties. These royalties are paid only when the resource is actually produced. Those interested in more information are invited to visit the BLM website at www.blm.gov/ut/st/en.html.

Dan Mayhew noted that the economic role of public lands, particularly in the west, is changing. The Sierra Club welcomes collaboration with the BLM in designing a successful preservation program for Utah lands and wildlife. Acknowledging the state's continuing energy needs, he countered that preservation considerations should balance extraction efforts.

Tourism has a huge impact on Utah state lands. Traveler spending is estimated to have generated \$631M in state and local tax revenues. Outdoor recreation and Utah's unique natural settings draw a majority of these travelers to the state. It's essential, Mr. Mayhew said, to preserve these wilderness places for future generations.

Utah has 100,000 miles of tracks and trails, 30% of which are on BLM lands. Most of these trails don't conflict with protected lands. Mr. Mayhew pointed out that off-road vehicle (ORV) enthusiasts already have access to over 12,000 miles of routes throughout Utah's national forests. Science-based environmental protection is The Sierra Club's goal. For more information, visit the Utah Chapter of the Sierra Club at utah.sierraclub.org.

Mary Tullius affirmed Utah's state parks to be an irreplaceable legacy, held in trust for future generations. The park system is integrated into local economies as a net benefit. For every taxpayer dollar spent on parks & recreation, the system gives back eight dollars.

Volunteers donated 107,000 service hours to the state park system in 2010. The agency manages Utah's 43 state parks and the ORV, boating, and trails programs, providing education and assistance to the public. It also partners with libraries statewide to provide Utah State Parks Annual Passes to library patrons.

Last year, The Parks & Recreation Dept. suffered a \$4.6M reduction in the general fund and another \$3M cut this year. Budget cuts may

continue in the uncertain economy. It will require creative measures to keep the park system viable and self-sufficient.

Responding to questions, Ms. Tullius said no state parks are scheduled for closure. However, additional budget cuts may require it in the future. State parks co-ordinate policy with the forest service, the BLM, and the national park system. "Camp hosts" are volunteers who oversee day-to-day campground activities and help deter vandalism.

Peter Donner spoke of Utah's stock of natural wealth in its public land. Citing the example of the now-defunct arsenic mining in Gold Hill, he made the point that without jobs, there is no economy. Even though parts of the state may have value due to their resources, unless those resources are being developed, the state does not benefit.

The Office of Planning and Budget considers how area demographics influence the state budget. Tourism drives much of our economic base, as evidenced by the \$1.3B out-of-state visitor spending in Utah last year. Tourism accounts for about 7% of the state's budget. All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) activity contributes more than \$10M to the state economy.

Utah's outdoor recreation economy contributes \$5.8B annually to the state. It supports 65,000 jobs and generates nearly \$30M in annual state tax revenues. It produces nearly \$4B annually in retail sales and services, accounting for almost 5% of gross state product. Additionally, it creates sustainable, long-term economic growth in city and rural areas across the state.

Rep. Mike Noel (R) described his 14-year long work on public land issues to be primarily comprised of fighting the lawsuits brought by environmentalists. He said activist groups spend millions of dollars every year in an effort to deny access to public lands via our public roads. They should not, he believes, be entitled to sue on behalf of the federal government. The state is becoming more aggressive in a "pushback" effort to win back its rightful access.

The state economy, Rep. Noel asserted, is harmed when regulations too often restrict

farmers and ranchers from using their own land, motion pictures being filmed on protected lands, or outdoor enthusiasts accessing federal lands. Further, her said, the ill-advised protection of the wolf population is causing it to grow at an alarming rate, devastating many cattle and sheep ranches.

Responding to questions, Rep Noel cautioned that environmental groups are threatening the

Coral Pink Sand Dunes road, among others. He stressed his intent is only to protect existing roads, not create new ones. He believes oil and gas companies can protect surface area with their extraction methods. Utah needs the revenue generated through careful development of our public lands.

Reported by Pam Grange

General Session 11

Program Topic: Electronic Recycling

Presented by: *Energy/Natural Resources/Agriculture & Environment*

Director: Kari Malkovich

Co-Chairs: Hilarie Orman & Linda Watters

Speakers: **Rep. Becky Edwards (R) Dist. 20; Davis & SL Counties (Bountiful, NSL, SLC)**
Sponsor – HB102 Electronic Scrap Recycling

Sydney Barfuss – Intern for Sen. Stephen Urquhart (R) Dist.29; Washington County
Sponsor – SB184 Disposal of Electronic Waste

Scott Campbell – Owner, Electronic Recycling Solutions

Rep. Edwards (R) described her bill **HB102** as a long-overdue first step in addressing the problems of recycling electronic products. It creates an Electronic Recycling Program within the Division of Solid and Hazardous Waste. It also imposes fees related to the sale, collection, and recycling of electronic devices on manufacturers, recyclers, collectors, and retailers.

Electronic devices make up the fastest growing waste stream in the United States. The average U.S. household will have, over time, 24 electronic devices awaiting disposal. Utah has the opportunity to lead in putting a program in

place to dispose of them responsibly. Rep. Edwards favors a “producer-responsible model” as a solution, and said Utahans are paying for disposals in others states that have this model already in place. Electronic device disposal costs in Salt Lake County is \$100,000 annually and is expected to double within the next few years.

Recycling costs are built into the price of electronic devices and most consumers are unaware of it. Consequently, they often pay again to dispose of them. Manufacturers have opposed **HB102** due to what Rep. Edwards says is the undue financial burden placed by them on consumers.

Responding to questions, she said Sandy City has bins that will accept recycling scrap. Wasatch Front cities have generally expressed a willingness to incur the costs of monitoring the recycling process. The League of Cities & Towns and the Salt Lake mayor's office are among those who support the bill.

Sydney Barfuss, speaking for Sen. Urquhart **(R)**, described **SB184** (text not yet available) as a free market approach to disposal of electronic Waste. A voluntary program, it has the consumer pay a small recycling fee to the manufacturer, usually in exchange for a gift certificate.

The Consumer Electronics Association (CEA) and several major manufacturers are working with a number of Utah counties to format a workable program. Deseret Industries, which accepts small electronic devices but not major appliances, has also expressed interest in participating.

Responding to questions, Ms. Barfuss said major appliances fall into a different recycling category than electronic devices. If both **HB102** and **SB184** were to pass, they are not anticipated to conflict.

Scott Campbell said at present there are three ways people dispose of electronic devices: They (1) throw the device away, (2) donate it, or (3) pay to recycle it. Most consumers want to be responsible, but are uncertain about what to do.

Although supporting the intent of Rep. Edward's bill, Mr. Campbell finds some of the particulars troubling to small business recyclers. The credentialing requirements are too stringent, he said, to allow small business' involvement. Billing of manufacturers is cumbersome, in that each recycler must bill separately, based on a market share. He said his company would be willing to support the bill if it were modified to address these issues.

Responding to questions, Mr. Campbell said The Department of Environmental Equality could be a central clearinghouse to pay separate manufacturers. This would reduce clerical hassles & administrative costs. Since computers and cell phones contain personal data, his recycling company must carry liability insurance. It does not ship electronic waste to developing nations where unsafe extraction methods pose a threat to workers.

Reported by Pam Grange

NOTE: The Feb 2, 2010 Bulletin erroneously referred to Rep. Patrice Arent's bill **HB89** "**Protection of Children Riding in Motor Vehicles**" as **HB389**. WSLC membership voted to pass a resolution in support of **HB89**.

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