



TRIBAL AND STATE RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Wednesday, July 22, 2026

Prairie Knights Casino and Resort, 7932 State Highway 24
Fort Yates, North Dakota

Representative Dawson Holle, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 11:16 a.m.

Members present: Representatives Dawson Holle, Collette Brown, Matthew Heilman; Senators Richard Marcellais,* Tim Mathern,* Scott Meyer*

Member absent: Representative Jon O. Nelson

Others present: Representatives Jayme Davis* and Karen M. Rohr

Daniela Aki, Ashley Jahner, and Cheryl Ann Kary, Sacred Pipe Resource Center; Nola Taken Alive and Wilberta Red Tomahawk, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe; Dave Archambault II, Wozu Inc.; Terry McCloud, Bureau of Indian Affairs; Koreen Ressler, Sitting Bull College

See [Appendix A](#) for additional persons present.

**Attended remotely*

It was moved by Senator Marcellais, seconded by Representative Heilman, and carried on a voice vote that the minutes of the May 13, 2026, meeting be approved as distributed.

TRIBAL-STATE RELATIONS

Ms. Stephanie Yellow Hammer, Representative-at-Large, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, provided information regarding tribal and state relations. She noted:

- Communication is important to maintain a productive relationship between the state and the tribe and tribal representatives should be included in substantive discussions regarding child welfare, Medicaid, and public safety.
- The transition from human services operated at the county level to human services operated within zones made communication between the tribe and the human services agencies more difficult because residents encountered more automated systems rather than in-person assistance.
- The length of time and legal complexity involved in becoming a foster parent creates barriers for tribal members and delayed foster care placements.

Ms. Wilberta Red Tomahawk, District Representative, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, provided information regarding tribal and state relations. She noted:

- Cities within the reservation would benefit from state grants for infrastructure improvements to remedy deteriorating roads and aging water and sewerlines. Potential discrepancies between annual district population counts and census data collected on the reservation may have reduced federal infrastructure funding to cities within the boundaries of the reservation.
- Residents of both the state and the tribe would benefit from additional state regulation of charitable gaming.

Mr. Cyril Archambault, Representative-at-Large, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, provided information regarding tribal and state relations. He noted:

- The importance of placing foster children who are enrolled members with tribal families.
- The lack of sufficient federal funding for roads within the boundaries of the reservation makes tribal infrastructure improvements difficult.

Mr. Joseph McNeil, Chief Executive Officer, SAGE Development Authority, provided information ([Appendix B](#)) regarding energy development with the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. He noted:

- A 235-megawatt proposed wind farm will be located on both tribal land and fee land.
- Revenue from the project will generate future investment, jobs, and housing activity.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. McNeil noted the Department of the Interior requires the Secretary of the Interior to approve permits for new wind and solar projects that will be built on federal land.

Ms. Nola Taken Alive, Representative-at-Large, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, provided information regarding tribal and state relations. She noted:

- Respect for treaties is the cornerstone of effective tribal relations.
- The expansion of off-reservation charitable gaming has reduced tribal gaming income.
- Providing cultural support to Native American youth improves graduation rates among Native Americans.
- Limiting the number of beds for mental health treatment facilities prevents the tribe from effectively assisting enrolled members with mental health needs.

Ms. Karol Kelly, Tax Director, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, provided information ([Appendix C](#)) regarding tribal taxation. She noted the tribe and state would benefit from an updated tobacco tax agreement.

Mr. Steve Sitting Bear, Chairman, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, provided information regarding tribal and state relations. He noted:

- Jurisdictional disputes between the tribe, state, and county create difficulties for the tribe in effectively enforcing laws within tribal boundaries.
- The tribe should control permitting for firework sales and liquor licensing within the boundaries of the reservation and concerns with firework permits being issued despite tribal fire restrictions and liquor licenses being issued in instances in which tribal requirements were bypassed.

Mr. Dave Archambault II, Chief Executive Officer, Wozu Inc., provided information regarding an overview of the organization. He noted:

- Wozu Inc., uses traditional regenerative farming techniques to increase biodiversity and restore land damaged by conventional agriculture. The idea for the organization started following the Dakota Access Pipeline protests in 2016 and the organization began operations in 2021.
- The organization began raising cattle to regenerate land, and following success raising cattle, the organization transitioned to raising bison.
- The organization processes approximately 12 bison per year for food and other products.
- The organization provides education about traditional farming techniques to children and other community members.

Ms. Cheryl Ann Kary, Executive Director, Sacred Pipe Resource Center, provided information ([Appendix D](#)) regarding an overview of the center. She noted there are enrolled tribal members in every county and the needs of off-reservation members may be overlooked by the state and the tribe.

Ms. Ashley Jahner, Director of Advocacy, Sacred Pipe Resource Center, provided information ([Appendix E](#)) regarding Native American advocacy and tenant rights advocacy. She noted many Native American families are evicted due to additional individuals residing on the premises who are not listed on the lease.

Ms. Daniela Aki, Director of Civic Engagement, Sacred Pipe Resource Center, provided information regarding tribal voting and civic engagement. She noted examples of acceptable tribal identification were not included in poll worker training materials until recently.

Mr. Terry McCloud, Assistant Special Agent in Charge, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Office of Justice Services, District I, provided information regarding law enforcement on the Standing Rock Reservation. He noted:

- Key priorities of the Bureau of Indian Affairs are improving the response time to emergencies on the Standing Rock Reservation, increasing community presence, and maintaining professionalism.
- The time sensitive nature of missing persons cases make those cases some of the highest priority cases for law enforcement.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. McCloud noted:

- The large land area of the Standing Rock Reservation makes improving response times challenging.
- Of the 26 Bureau of Indian Affairs law enforcement positions on the Standing Rock Reservation, 7 positions are vacant.

Mr. Casey Anderson, Deputy Director, introduced Mr. Scott Winkelman, Chief Game Warden, Game and Fish Department, to present information ([Appendix F](#)) regarding fishing jurisdiction. Mr. Winkelman noted the question of state and tribal jurisdiction is determined by the United States Constitution, state and federal laws, treaties, and court decisions applicable to each tribe.

In response to questions from committee members, Mr. Winkelman noted the state works with the tribe to prevent invasive species from entering the water by inspecting watercraft entering lakes and rivers at boat ramps located on tribal land.

Dr. Koreen Ressler, Vice President, Sitting Bull College, provided information ([Appendix G](#)) regarding an overview of the college. She noted:

- Sitting Bull College is open to all students, and students are not required to be enrolled members of a tribe.
- The majority of non-Native American students attending the college live in South Dakota and do not count toward funding from the State of North Dakota.

Mr. Duane Poitra, Business Manager, Turtle Mountain Schools, Belcourt School District, provided information ([Appendix H](#)) regarding tribal education and cooperative agreements. He noted additional authority is needed for a public school district to enter an agreement with a tribal grant school funded by the Bureau of Indian Education.

Mr. Casey Orvedal, Counsel, Legislative Council, distributed information ([Appendix I](#)) from the National Conference of State Legislatures regarding county tax formulas.

Mr. Orvedal distributed information ([Appendix J](#)) from the Department of Water Resources regarding sovereign land.

No further business appearing, Chairman Holle adjourned the meeting at 4:27 p.m.

Casey Orvedal
Counsel

ATTACH:10