The Council

Agriculture and Water Management Committee

The Agriculture and Water Management Committee held its fifth and final meeting of the interim on September 8. The committee received a report from the Agriculture Commissioner on Low-Carbon Fuels Fund transactions and total disbursements from the Environmental Impact Mitigation Fund. A representative from the Missouri River Joint Water Board provided information on the status of irrigation in the state and methods to expand irrigation.

The committee heard testimony from the Director of the Department of Water Resources, including information on the amount of water in the Devils Lake Basin, geographic and economic constraints associated with removing excess water from the Devils Lake Basin, whether the Devils Lake Basin receives excess water through underground movement, and the amount of compensation provided to landowners downstream of the Devils Lake discharge outlets.

The committee recommended that the Legislative Management introduce a concurrent resolution draft and a bill draft during the upcoming legislative session. The resolution draft urges the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to modify federal rules governing drain tile setback distances adjacent to easements owned by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. The bill draft excludes certain lands in the Devils Lake Basin from the definition of "sovereign lands" and establishes a rebuttable presumption, which the State of North Dakota must overcome, that flooding in the Devils Lake Basin is being caused by artificial, state-authorized water management practices rather than natural events.

Upcoming Meetings

September

15 Education
16 Special Education Funding
17 Water Topics Overview
21-22 Higher Education Institutions
22 Legislative Audit and Fiscal Review
24 Information Technology
Tribal and State Relations
29 Legislative Task Force on Government Efficiency
Tax Reform and Relief Advisory
30 Budget Section (including divisions)

October

1 Employee Benefits Programs
Protection and Victim Services
6 Health Care

Human Services Committee

The Human Services Committee held its final meeting of the interim on September 9. The committee received a progress update from the Interagency Council on Homelessness and on the federal funding impacts to the Continuum of Care Program. The committee also heard from a representative of the North Dakota School for the Deaf on the effects of language deprivation on child development.

The Legislative Council's program evaluation staff presented an evaluation of the Department of Health and Human Services' child care services. The evaluation provided three findings and recommendations to the department on improving the delivery of child care services. The committee voted to recommend continuing the evaluation for the current biennium. The department presented information on changes that have been made to the Child Care Assistance Program, including the addition of a waitlist for services. Legislative Council staff discussed potential changes to child care provider licensing laws in a proposed bill draft.

The committee received several reports, including information on long-term structured residences; accreditation requirements and provider costs for serving individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities; a payment model continuum for basic care, assisted living, and adult residential facilities; and provider reimbursement rates under the Medicaid Expansion Program.

The committee also received an annual report on the activities of the Children's Cabinet.

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