

The Council

Legislative Council

Water Topics Overview Committee

The Water Topics Overview Committee held its first meeting on September 18. The committee is charged with several statutory duties, including holding any necessary discussions with adjacent states on water topics and receiving and reviewing any request anticipated to be submitted to the State Water Commission or to the next Legislative Assembly for which the state cost-share is estimated to be \$10 million or more.

The committee received testimony on the mission, vision, values, functions, and responsibilities of the Water Resources Department; an overview of the state-owned water projects and estimated completion dates of these projects; the department's budgeting and cash management strategy; and the department's internal studies relating to the project cost-share policies and future management of state-owned projects.

The committee is required to study the feasibility and desirability of assigning management authority for the waters of the state to the area located in the naturally occurring watershed, rather than assigning management authority based on political subdivision boundaries. The Department of Water Resources provided information about how the state currently manages water and identified other states managing water on a watershed basis.

The committee also is required to study funding for stormwater projects in the state, including current funding sources, and the feasibility and desirability of establishing a wastewater project fund to provide grants for upgrading, constructing, or replacing wastewater infrastructure. The committee received background information regarding the roles of the legacy infrastructure loan fund, the clean water state revolving loan fund, and the drinking water state revolving loan fund in providing funding for wastewater and stormwater projects in the state. The State Water Commission provided testimony relating to the instances when the State Water Commission or the Department of Water Resources conducts an economic analysis on water projects in the state. The next committee meeting is tentatively planned for mid-December.

ND Legislative Council Featured Speakers



Dustin Richard, Counsel



Liz Fordahl, Counsel



Casey Orvedal, Counsel

On Wednesday, September 17, Legislative Council staff attorneys Dustin Richard, Liz Fordahl, and Casey Orvedal, were featured speakers at the Western Dakota Association of Legal Assistants' fall seminar at the Heritage Center in Bismarck. The presentation included background, structure, and duties of the Legislative Council, legislative updates from the 2025 legislative session, and the assigned duties and responsibilities of the Legislative Management and its interim committees ahead of the 2027 legislative session.

Upcoming Meetings

September

- 23 Legislative Procedure and Arrangements
Tax Reform and Relief Advisory
- 24 Budget Section (including all subdivisions)
Child Custody Review Task Force
- 25 Government Finance
- 30 Protection and Victim Services

October

- 15 Education
- 22 Legacy and Budget Stabilization Fund
Advisory Board
- 23 Emergency Response Services
- 30 Employee Benefits Programs

November

- 18 Health Care
- 19 Human Services



LC Pet Spotlight: LOLA

Like my human mother, I hail from out of state. As a rescue mutt from Texas, I may not have had the most prestigious start, but now I serve as the leader of my pack, ruling with an iron paw. My human may think she's the boss, but I can successfully appeal any of her decisions with a tilt of the head and a batt of my big puppy dog eyes. See *Pleading With Eyes v. Human Willpower* (2025). I may be small, but I'm mighty, weighing in at 13 pounds of pure sass. My favorite activities include sunbathing in the garden and digging an extensive network of holes in the backyard. I take my work seriously, leaving no vole hole unturned (currently at two confirmed kills). Like my human, I meticulously plan and organize my work, refusing to rest until the job is done. Can you guess my human? (see answer below)