

MINUTES
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, July 1, 2021
10:00 AM
Room A, MAC
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Ronald Caldwell, Chair; Ricky Hill, Vice Chair; Charles Beckham, Ben Gilmore, Bill Sample, James Sturch and David Wallace; Representatives DeAnn Vaught, Chair; Ken Bragg, Cameron Cooper, Les Eaves, Jack Fortner, David Hillman, Steve Hollowell, Ron McNair, Brandt Smith, and Carlton Wing

Other members present: Senators Linda Chesterfield, Trent Garner, and Larry Teague; Representatives Fred Allen, Mark Berry, Charlene Fite, Jimmy Gazaway, Austin McCollum, Tippi McCullough, Johnny Rye, Keith Slape, and Kendon Underwood

Senator Caldwell called the meeting to order.

Approval of Special Expenses Incurred by the House and Senate Interim Committees on Agriculture, Forestry & Economic Development

Senator Hill made a motion to authorize special expenses, seconded by Senator Beckham, and the motion carried.

Approval of the September 17, 2020, Meeting Minutes [EXHIBIT D]

Representative McNair made a motion to approve the minutes seconded by Senator Hill, and the motion carried.

Discussion of the Northeast Rice Research and Extension Center, University of Arkansas System Division of Agriculture (UADA)

Dr. Timothy Burcham, Director, UADA, provided an overview on upcoming and current rice research and development at the University of Arkansas. Brad Doyle, Farmer, spoke to the importance of rice production and research for the state of Arkansas.

Update on Impact of Flood Damage to the Row Crop Industry [EXHIBIT F]

Dr. John Anderson, Professor and Department Head, Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Department, University of Arkansas, provided a crop loss and economic damage summary of the June 6-9, 2021, Southeast Arkansas flood event.

Discussion of the 2020 Arkansas Groundwater Management and Protection Report [EXHIBIT G]

Bruce Holland, Executive Director, Arkansas Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Division (ADADNR); and Jim Battreal, Geology Supervisor, ADADNR, presented the 2020 Groundwater Protection & Management Report.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

MINUTES
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Monday, July 19, 2021
3:00 PM
Hot Springs Convention Center
Hot Springs, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Ronald Caldwell, Chair; Ricky Hill, Vice Chair; Charles Beckham, Ben Gilmore, and David Wallace; Representatives DeAnn Vaught, Chair; Roger Lynch, Vice Chair; Bruce Coleman, Cameron Cooper, Denise Jones Ennett, Jon Eubanks, Jack Fortner, David Hillman, Steve Hollowell, Joe Jett, Ron McNair, and Brandt Smith

Other members present: Senators Kim Hammer and Mark Johnson; Representatives Mary Bentley, Delia Haak, Jack Ladyman, Mark Lowery, and Johnny Rye

Senator Caldwell called the meeting to order.

Report on Dicamba Herbicide Damage

Wes Ward, Secretary, Arkansas Department of Agriculture (ADA), and Scott Bray, State Plant Board Director, ADA, provided an update on Dicamba herbicide damage and penalty implementation.

Discussion of Feral Hog Eradication Task Force

J.P. Fairhead, Feral Hog Coordinator, ADA, presented an update on feral hog damage and eradication.

Discussion of Flood Damage on Agriculture Industry

Wes Ward, Secretary, ADA, and Mark Lambert, Director, Commodity Activities and Economics, Farm Bureau Arkansas, provided an overview of crop damage caused by recent rainfall events and discussed strategies to mitigate these risks in the future.

Update on County Fairs

Patrick Fisk, Director, Arkansas Livestock and Poultry Commission, provided an update on American Rescue Plan funding availability and the rule making processes regarding meat processing.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

MINUTES
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION

Wednesday, September 8, 2021

2:00 PM

Hot Springs Convention Center
134 Convention Blvd, Hot Springs, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Ronald Caldwell, Chair; Charles Beckham, Linda Chesterfield, Lance Eads, Joyce Elliott, Jane English, Ben Gilmore, Greg Leding, and Bill Sample; Representatives DeAnn Vaught, Chair; Roger Lynch, Vice Chair; Rick Beck, Bruce Coleman, Cameron Cooper, Denise Jones Ennett, Jon Eubanks, Jack Fortner, David Hillman, Steve Hollowell, Joe Jett, Ron McNair, and Brandt Smith

Other members present: Senators Alan Clark and Kim Hammer; Representatives Mary Bentley, Delia Haak, Jack Ladyman, Mark Lowery, and Johnny Rye

Senator Caldwell called the meeting to order.

Reports on Broadband Connectivity Initiatives

Steven Porch, Executive Broadband Manager, Arkansas Economic Development Commission; The Honorable Louis Riggs, State Representative, District 5, State of Missouri; and Brandon Presley, Northern District Commissioner, Mississippi Public Service Commission; each gave an overview of current broadband initiatives to increase connectivity in their respective jurisdictions.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

MINUTES
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY
AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, October 21, 2021

10:00 AM

Embassy Suites Red Wolf Convention Center, Caraway A & B, 223 Red Wolf Blvd.
Jonesboro, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Ronald Caldwell, Chair; Ricky Hill, Vice Chair; Ben Gilmore, Ricky Hill, and Dan Sullivan; Representatives DeAnn Vaught, Chair; Howard Beaty, Stan Berry, Harlan Breaux, Craig Christiansen, Cameron Cooper, Les Eaves, Jack Fortner, David Hillman, Steve Hollowell, Rick McClure, Ron McNair, and Brandt Smith

Other members present: Senator Mark Johnson; Representatives Mary Bentley, Jack Ladyman, and Johnny Rye

Senator Caldwell called the meeting to order.

Report from Arkansas Economic Development Commission

Clint O'Neal, Deputy Director & Executive Vice President of Global Business, and Steve Sparks, Director, Existing Business Division, gave an overview of current economic development projects and projected growth throughout Arkansas.

Presentations from Arkansas State University College of Agriculture

Dr. Elizabeth Hood, Lipscomb Distinguished Professor; Dr. John Nowlin, Assistant Professor of Geospatial Technologies; and Dr. David Newman, Associate Professor of Animal Science; provided an overview of transgenic plant research and agricultural biotechnology.

Overview of Economic Development Initiatives in Jonesboro

Mark Young, President and CEO, Jonesboro Chamber of Commerce, and Steven Lamm, Vice President of Economic Development, Jonesboro Unlimited, provided an overview of current economic development opportunities in the Jonesboro area.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

MINUTES
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, December 2, 2021
10:00 AM
Arkansas Ballroom, Little Rock Marriot
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Ricky Hill, Vice Chair; and Charles Beckham; Representatives DeAnn Vaught, Chair; Harlan Breaux, Ken Bragg, Bruce Coleman, Cameron Cooper, Les Eaves, Jon Eubanks, Jack Fortner, David Hillman, Steve Hollowell, Ron McNair, Matthew Shepherd, Brandt Smith, and Carlton Wing

Other members present: Senators Trent Garner and Mark Johnson; Representatives Johnny Rye and Keith Slape

Representative Vaught called the meeting to order.

Update from Arkansas Department of Agriculture (ADA)

Wes Ward, Secretary, ADA, provided an update on the groundwater protection and management program.

Presentation Regarding Growing Demand in Local Food Systems and Direct to Consumer Markets

Ronald L. Rainey, Professor & Assistant Vice President, University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, and Damon Helton, Owner/Operator, The Farm at Barefoot Bend, gave a presentation regarding the effects of Covid-19 concerning the local food system and increased demand for direct to consumer markets across Arkansas.

Farm to Fork Program Report

Dr. David Newman, Associate Professor of Animal Science, Arkansas State University, provided an overview of their public outreach programming and research activities.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:15 a.m.

MINUTES
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Tuesday, May 10, 2022

4:00 PM

The Durand Center

303 North Main Street, Harrison, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senator Ronald Caldwell, Chair; Representatives Roger Lynch, Vice-Chair; Bruce Coleman, Cameron Cooper, Denise Ennett, Jack Fortner, Stephen Magie, Ron McNair, and Carlton Wing

Other members present: Senator Bob Ballinger

Senator Caldwell called the meeting to order.

Update from Department of Agriculture

Wes Ward, Secretary, Arkansas Department of Agriculture provided an update on current operations within the Department of Agriculture such as infrastructure funding, African swine fever, Meat Inspection Program, and H2A Migrant Housing Inspections.

Presentation on Cyber Security Education Initiatives

Allen Yarborough, Superintendent, Searcy County School District, discussed the impact of the collaboration between North Arkansas College and Forge Institute to advance formal to professional career education in information technology and cybersecurity.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

MINUTES
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Wednesday, May 11, 2022

8:00 AM

The Durand Center

303 North Main Street, Harrison, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Ronald Caldwell, Chair; and Ben Gilmore; Representatives Roger Lynch, Vice-Chair; Bruce Coleman, Cameron Cooper, Denise Ennett, Jack Fortner, Stephen Magie, Ron McNair, Carlton Wing

Other members present: Senators Bob Ballinger and Missy Irvin

Senator Caldwell called the meeting to order.

Presentation by Buffalo River Conservation Committee

Wes Ward, Chair, Buffalo River Conservation Committee, provided an overview on conservation efforts, funding allocation, septic tank remediation, and tourism within the watershed.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:45 a.m.

MINUTES
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, May 12, 2022

9:00 AM

Ballroom A/E, Statehouse Convention Center
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Ronald Caldwell, Chair; Ben Gilmore and David Wallace; Representatives Roger Lynch, Vice-Chair; Denise Ennett, Jack Fortner, Steve Hollowell, and Ron McNair

Other members present: Senator Dan Sullivan; Representatives Howard Beaty, Rick McClure, Jon Milligan, Johnny Rye, and Danny Watson

Senator Caldwell called the meeting to order.

Presentation by Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise

Esperanza Massana-Crain, Director, Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE), gave an overview of available business resources, community resources, certifications and leadership trainings.

Discussion on Rural Development Initiatives

Becca Caldwell, Director of Rural Services, Arkansas Economic Development Commission, provided an overview on a variety of grants available to preserve the values and quality of life for rural Arkansans.

Discussion on Fair Funding

Wes Ward, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, gave an update on the availability and usage of upcoming Fair Funding.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:45 a.m.

MINUTES
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Thursday, September 22, 2022

10:00 AM

UA- Fort Smith Center for Economic Development
70 S. 7th Street, Fort Smith, Arkansas

Committee members present: Representatives DeAnn Vaught, Chair; Stan Berry, Bruce Coleman, and Denise Jones-Ennett

Other members present: Senator Joyce Elliott; Representatives Fred Allen, Cindy Crawford, Kenneth Ferguson, Vivian Flowers, Monte Hodges, Fred Love, Milton Nicks, Aaron Pilkington, Jay Richardson, Jamie Scott, and Joy Springer

Representative Vaught called the meeting to order.

Update from Department of Agriculture

Wes Ward, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, provided an update on water and wastewater financing, infrastructure funding, and the state Meat Inspection Program.

Report on Arkansas Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Brad McCaleb, Division Head, Transportation Planning and Policy, Arkansas Department of Transportation, gave an overview of the NEVI program requirements and implementation process. John Bethel, Director of Public Affairs, Entergy, discussed the plan to provide electric vehicle charging stations across Arkansas.

Growing the Creative Economy

Senator Joyce Elliot, Co-Chair, Legislative Arts & Technology Boot Camp, provided an overview of the Arkansas Legislative Arts & Technology Boot Camp Report.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

MINUTES
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
SENATE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Meeting Jointly
Monday, October 31, 2022
10:00 AM
Room A, MAC
Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Ronald Caldwell, Chair; Ricky Hill, Vice-Chair; Ben Gilmore, and Bill Sample; Representatives DeAnn Vaught, Chair; Stan Berry, Harlan Breaux, Bruce Coleman, Cameron Cooper, Les Eaves, Denise Jones Ennett, Jon Eubanks, Jack Fortner, David Hillman, Steve Hollowell, Ron McNair, and Brandt Smith

Other members present: Senator Stubblefield; Representatives Fred Allen, Ken Bragg, Frances Cavanaugh, Jim Dotson, Kenneth Ferguson, Jack Ladyman, Ron McNair, Stephen Meeks, Johnny Rye, Joy Springer, and Dwight Tosh

Senator Caldwell called the meeting to order.

Update from University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture

Dr. Deacue Fields, Vice President for Agriculture, provided an update regarding pay disparities between faculty members, research impacts for the University of Arkansas and Division of Agriculture, and the return rate on research.

Presentation from San Antonio Water System

Gregg Eckhardt, Senior Resource Analyst, San Antonio Water System, explained the ground and surface water sources usage, ownership, conservation, and desalination in San Antonio, Texas.

Report on Health Effects of Agricultural Burning [EXHIBIT E]

Dr. Warren Skaug, Pediatrician, presented on the effects of agricultural burning on air quality and people's health.

Presentation from White River Irrigation District

Dan Hooks, President, White River Irrigation District, and Robert Moery, Director, Government Relations, discussed the White River Irrigation project stating that the DeVall's Bluff pump station is 95% complete, a one hundred acre regulating reservoir is complete, and they are building canals to connect to the reservoir.

Report on Economic Impact of Low River Levels [HANDOUT 1]

John McMinn, Director, Commodity Activities and Economics, Arkansas Farm Bureau (ARFB); and Tyler Oxner, Director, Commodity Activities and Economics, ARFB; reported on the impact of low river levels on shipping agricultural products for Arkansas farmers and the subsequent rising prices for consumers as a result.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

MINUTES
SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEES ON AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Friday, December 9, 2022

10:00 AM

Room A, MAC

Little Rock, Arkansas

Committee members present: Senators Ronald Caldwell, Chair; Ricky Hill, Vice Chair; Ben Gilmore, and David Wallace; Representatives DeAnn Vaught, Chair; Roger Lynch, Vice Chair; Stan Berry, Harlan Breaux, Bruce Coleman, Cameron Cooper, Jon Eubanks, Jack Fortner, David Hillman, Steve Hollowell, Joe Jett, Ron McNair, and Brandt Smith

Other members present: Senators Scott Flippo, and Dan Sullivan; Representatives Jim Dotson, Charlene Fite, Jack Ladyman, Aaron Pilkington, and Keith Slape

Senator Caldwell called the meeting to order.

Discussion of Rule Reports Regarding Cattle and Dairy Production

Wes Ward, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, provided an overview of the livestock rules report. Laura Shue, General Counsel, Department of Health provided an overview of the cattle and milk production rules and regulations.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.