

2020 REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS & REVENUE

BUDGET REVIEW SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, PUBLIC
PROTECTION, TOURISM, AND ENERGY

1st Meeting

February 10, 2020

The Budget Review Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Protection, Tourism, and Energy, of the House Standing Committee on Appropriations & Revenue held its 1st meeting of the 2020 Regular Session on February 10, 2020, Upon Adjournment, in Room 129 of the Capitol Annex. The Chair called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Members Present: Representative Lynn Bechler, Chair; Representatives Terri Branham Clark, Savannah Maddox, Ruth Ann Palumbo, Dean Schamore, and Les Yates.

Guests: Robert Conway, Commissioner, Department of Parks; Chris Reece, Executive Director, Office of Finance, Tourism, Arts, and Heritage Cabinet; Rob Richards, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Parks.

LRC Staff: Sara Rome, Joey Holt, Ben Thompson, and Jim Thornton

Department of Parks

The presenters from the Department of Parks gave an overview of the impact of the Governor's budget on the status and condition of the park system. Commissioner Robert Conway and Deputy Commissioner Richards discussed the economic impact of the parks on state revenue. They discussed the park system's theme of "Restoring the Finest" and outlined the expenditures for backlogged maintenance, including roof replacements and repairs and wastewater treatment upgrades. There was discussion also on the progress of cable and utility upgrades.

In response to questions from Chairman Bechler on internet and WiFi access in the state parks, Deputy Commissioner Richards indicated that most of the allocated funds are being spent on infrastructure projects and that the system is in the process of upgrading the infrastructure so that it can expand WiFi access, whether that be with Kentucky Wired or another provider. Deputy Commissioner Richards also said the system is negotiating with AT&T in areas where service is available. Deputy Commissioner Richards noted that although most of Parks' golf courses are not themselves profitable, they are an important part of the overall package that draws guests to the parks.

In response to a question from Representative Clark, Commissioner Conway said the system will provide a detailed breakdown of the projects funded from the \$50 million provided by 2019RS HB 268 in FY 20.

In response to questions from Representative Yates and Chairman Bechler, Commissioner Conway stated that overall occupancy in the system was about 45% and the system was developing marketing approaches to improve that occupancy and overall park use, especially in parks with significant Kentucky historical connections.

There being no further business to come before the subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.