

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS AND REVENUE

Budget Review Subcommittee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Protection

Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2020 Interim

August 19, 2020

Call to Order and Roll Call

The 3rd meeting of the Budget Review Subcommittee on Economic Development, Tourism, and Environmental Protection of the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue was held on Wednesday, August 19, 2020, at 8:30 AM, in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Lynn Bechler, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Lynn Bechler, Co-Chair; Senator Max Wise; Representatives Terri Branham Clark, Savannah Maddox, Dean Schamore, and Russell Webber.

Guests: Rebecca Goodman, Secretary, Energy and Environment Cabinet (EEC); Tony Hatton, Commissioner, Department for Environmental Protection (DEP); John Lyons, Deputy Commissioner, DEP; and Cori Troutman, Assistant Director, Division of Financial Management, EEC.

LRC Staff: Sara Rome, Kevin Newton, Joseph Holt, and Benjamin Thompson.

Impact of COVID-19 on the Department for Environmental Protection

Secretary Goodman, Commissioner Hatton, Deputy Commissioner Lyons, and Assistant Director Troutman provided an update on the impact of COVID-19 on the Department for Environmental Protection and the regulatory flexibility that was implemented in response to the pandemic.

In response to questions from Chair Bechler, Deputy Commissioner Lyons noted that the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) memorandum regarding temporary relief of environmental compliance obligations would not be extended. Secretary Goodman noted that EEC could provide an extension but that the need for flexibility had severely reduced. Deputy Commissioner Lyons confirmed that DEP would follow up on businesses that had received flexibility to ensure that they were back in compliance. Commissioner

Hatton noted that many follow up visits and inspections had already taken place. Commissioner Hatton noted that it would be both dangerous and against federal regulations to make waivers on underground storage tank inspections permanent. Assistant Director Troutman stated that the “Other Personnel” line item in the DEP budgeted expenditures was for a variety of personnel related costs such as workers’ compensation insurance and employee training costs. Commissioner Hatton noted that DEP would like to retain staff as much as possible, but that younger employees tend to leave after only a few years. Assistant Director Troutman noted that the department believes that all COVID-19 related expenditures would be eligible for Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act reimbursement.

There being no further business before the subcommittee, the meeting was adjourned at 9:21AM.