



NEVADA LEGISLATURE JOINT INTERIM STANDING COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS

(Nevada Revised Statutes [NRS] 218E.320)

MINUTES

April 16, 2024

The third meeting of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Government Affairs for the 2023–2024 Interim was held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024, at 12:30 p.m. in Room 4401, Grant Sawyer State Office Building, 555 East Washington Avenue, Las Vegas, Nevada. The meeting was videoconferenced to Room 3138, Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada.

The agenda, minutes, meeting materials, and audio or video recording of the meeting are available on the Committee's [meeting page](#). The audio or video recording may also be found at <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Video/>. Copies of the audio or video record can be obtained through the Publications Office of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB) (publications@lcb.state.nv.us or 775/684-6835).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT IN LAS VEGAS:

Assemblywoman Selena Torres, Chair
Senator Edgar Flores, Vice Chair
Assemblyman Max Carter
Assemblyman Reuben D'Silva
Assemblyman Richard McArthur

COMMITTEE MEMBER PRESENT IN CARSON CITY:

Senator Skip Daly

COMMITTEE MEMBER ATTENDING REMOTELY:

Assemblyman Bert Gurr (Alternate for Assemblyman Gregory Koenig)

COMMITTEE MEMBER ABSENT:

Senator Ira Hansen (Excused)
Assemblyman Gregory Koenig

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL BUREAU STAFF PRESENT:

Jered McDonald, Chief Principal Policy Analyst, Research Division
Alberto Quintero, Senior Policy Analyst, Research Division
Jennifer Ruedy, Deputy Research Director, Research Division
Maria Velazquez, Research Policy Assistant, Research Division
Heidi Chlarson, Chief Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division
Jamie Black, Principal Deputy Legislative Counsel, Legal Division

*Items taken out of sequence during the meeting have been placed in agenda order.
[Indicate a summary of comments.]*

AGENDA ITEM I—OPENING REMARKS

Chair Torres:

Good afternoon and welcome to the third meeting of the Joint Interim Standing Committee on Government Affairs for the 2023–2024 Interim. Thank you to everyone for joining us online and in person.

[Chair Torres reviewed meeting and testimony guidelines.]

AGENDA ITEM II—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Torres:

There will be a public comment period at the beginning and the end of the meeting with public comment limited to two minutes per speaker. Staff will time each speaker during public comment to ensure everyone is given a fair opportunity to speak.

Is there anyone in Carsten City wishing to testify in public comment? I do not believe we see anybody there. We will come here to Las Vegas. Is there anybody here in Las Vegas wishing to testify in public comment? I do not see anyone itching to get to the podium yet today. We will go to the phones. Is there anyone on the line wishing to testify in public comment?

Broadcast and Production Services (BPS):

Chair, there are no callers to provide public comment at this time.

AGENDA ITEM III—APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETINGS ON JANUARY 25 AND FEBRUARY 22, 2024

Chair Torres:

Next on our agenda is the approval of the minutes for the meetings on January 25 and February 22, 2024.

ASSEMBLYMAN CARTER MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR THE MEETINGS ON JANUARY 25, AND FEBRUARY 22, 2024.

SENATOR DALY SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

AGENDA ITEM IV—PRESENTATIONS ON MANAGEMENT AND ACTIVITIES OF VECTOR CONTROL RELATED ENTITIES

Chair Torres:

At this time, we will go on to presentations on the management and activities of vector control related entities. When you are ready, go ahead and get started.

David Brown, Resident, Clark County:

I am here to discuss the need for dedicated mosquito control here in Clark County, Nevada. As a little bit of background, I know on the agenda I am listed as a Special Project Coordinator for the American Mosquito Control Association, but I need to let you know I am not here on the American Mosquito Control Association's behalf. I am actually here representing myself as a homeowner as well as representing my family. I have a daughter and grandchildren—and probably the residents who are also itching a little bit about why are we having such a significant problem with mosquitoes, and is there something we can do about it? I am going to try to offer ideas on what the best way of potentially addressing the mosquito problem that currently exists within Las Vegas. ([Agenda Item IV A](#)) [Due to copyright issues, the presentation is on file in the Research Library of the LCB, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/About/Contact.>]

A little bit of background—obviously, you all know about Clark County. You have about 2.2 million residents that live here year-round.

The Environmental Health Program objectives—who currently addresses mosquito control—do conduct routine surveillance to determine species abundance and disease status. That is a good thing. However, their counterpart notification for breeding site interventions is not within that same Department. There tends to be a lag of any type of intervention that may occur. Anytime you have education on mosquitoes, the biting, the potential sites where they can develop—is always a good thing. But what is troubling here is there are absolutely no coordinated mosquito control efforts across Clark County.

For example, in 2017, the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito was identified in a northern part of Las Vegas. You can see there circled, the spots and number of mosquitoes. It was in four zip codes that was initially identified.

By 2023, it has exploded and expanded throughout all of Clark County, even down into Henderson. You have 43 zip codes now, and those numbers are simply going to increase as time goes on without any intervention efforts.

In concert with that, you can see the *Aedes aegypti* counts have gone up, as well as citizen complaints have gone up.

I know Las Vegas is a desert. Mosquitoes require water to develop. But candidly, we seem to have plenty of water for that to happen as demonstrated here by the Sahara Casino and Hotel. And of course, backyard sources, which are great for this species of mosquito to propagate throughout communities.

What is most concerning to me about this is the number of visitors that Las Vegas sees in a year. Last time I gave this presentation was in August, and the chairperson I was speaking with suggested [there were] 50 million visitors. I see 40.8 million. What is concerning is they come from all over the globe. As I am sure you might be aware of, all over the globe we have significant mosquito diseases that can be brought here, left behind, and then transmitted by the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito, which tends to be a human biter. That is its preference. You want to make sure we try to reduce those mosquito populations before that happens.

The long-term community impact on this is there is no single coordinated mosquito control program across Clark County. *Aedes aegypti* will continue to expand. The community needs

a consistent and organized, integrated mosquito management plan. Potentially—or hopefully—that is being done or developed by an actual agency. Of course, we are always going to see the diseases that are listed here, whether they are Zika, chikungunya, dengue, West Nile virus, and any other new viruses that may present themselves.

A background on why I do not believe, right now, we have an effective program in Clark County—the National Association of County and City Health Officials conducted two surveys. The last one was in 2020. There were ten competencies but five core competencies that I want the Committee to focus on. One is routine mosquito surveillance. I have that underscored because that appears to be happening at least right now within the Environmental Health Department that is charged with conducting mosquito control—or at least identifying what the mosquito issues are. However, there needs to also be larviciding and adulticiding capabilities, routine vector control, species-specific abatement activities, and pesticide resistance testing. The reason why I have that in italics is because across the nation, when this was done, a lot of agencies were not conducting pesticide resistance testing. There were many that needed to be a bit more effective, but dedicated mosquito programs demonstrated that at least 63 percent of them throughout the country were effective based on this survey. While other programs, such as those that were housed in city or county environmental health departments, only 20 percent of them were effective at being able to conduct effective mosquito control.

Why is this an issue? Again, based on that survey, small communities—about 89 percent—needed improvement. Small communities were identified as having less than 50,000 residents. Medium communities, between 50,000 and 500,000 residents, about 63 percent needed improvement. Large communities with 500,000 residents, only 49 percent needed improvement. Yet in Clark County, they are only conducting one of the aspects of the five competencies, which is surveillance. I leave question marks on how much improvement I believe Clark County needs to have an effective mosquito control program.

As mentioned, the Environmental Health Department is currently responsible for conducting mosquito surveillance in Clark County. Many times, the issue with that is the program is housed within a division or department as opposed to having dedicated staff. I do not want to say anything bad about any of the people that are trying to conduct mosquito control here in Clark County because I have chatted with them several times. They are effective. They are efficient people. They are bright. They simply have too many other programs going on, or too many other responsibilities going on, to be able to conduct effective mosquito control in the area. If you do not have dedicated staff, you are simply not going to have a good, effective mosquito control program.

You have to ask yourself; can the existing program address the expansion of mosquitoes and other vectors? I would suggest the answer is no. Can the existing program participate in a national public health framework? The picture on the right, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) came out with a National Public Health Framework for the prevention and control of vector-borne diseases in humans. I would argue strongly that no, I do not currently believe Clark County is in a position to be able to effectively do that. Does existing program or other responsibilities prevent it from being effective? As I mentioned, many of the folks that are currently trying to conduct mosquito control have other responsibilities. I do not believe they have the time or the resources available to be able to effectively control these here. Is there a way for the community to have an effective mosquito control program? I believe there is.

Before I get there, I want to suggest one thing; would you combine fire and police? Back in the day, in the 1970s and 1980s, the idea was we can save money if we can cross-train

police and firefighters and put them all together to be able to address the costs or the concerns on trying to save money. On paper, it seemed like a great idea. Unfortunately, however, the cost and time involved in the cross-training proved prohibitive. You started diluting the expertise in both the police departments and the fire departments. In my opinion, it was not effective. It was recognized that each program needed specialized personnel. I am going to suggest the same thing needs to happen with mosquito and vector control.

What is needed? Respect for the entomological work. Again, many of the people I have chatted with in the Environmental Health Department have strong backgrounds in entomology. They would be able to do the work if that is all they were doing. Unfortunately, they are also having to do restaurant inspections and yard inspections on swimming pools. They simply do not have the time and necessary resources to be able to effectively conduct mosquito and vector control. You want to make sure you are up-to-date and use the best available science and best practices. I mentioned, I am with the American Mosquito Control Association. They have many resources that are available to help initiate a good, integrated mosquito management program for Clark County. Based on—I always hate to use the “CC” word, which is climate change. To me, it has become a political tetherball, but there is no denying things are changing here relative to temperatures and the expansion of potential mosquitoes and viruses. You want to make sure we are prepared also for any other invasive species that might make themselves present here in Clark County, as well as any of the other vectors that are currently being identified by the CDC. I would suggest that mosquito and vector control need to stand alone in this process.

How can this be accomplished in order of preference? I believe a standalone special district would be appropriate for Clark County. Nevada has the necessary statutes on the books to be able to make this happen. It needs the political will to start initiating it. There are other ways this can work: a dedicated program housed within another program can be effective. For example, in Fairfax, Virginia, they have such a program. They have dedicated funding sources and dedicated personnel that are solely responsible for conducting mosquito and vector control. Lastly, professional mosquito services. What I mean by that is there are organizations that have the full complement of integrated mosquito management resources that are available for hire.

I want to thank you again for listening to my presentation. I am looking forward to trying to protect our community here from the most dangerous animal on the planet. With that, I will be happy to answer any questions.

Chair Torres:

Thank you, Mr. Brown, for that presentation on the most dangerous animal on the planet. At this time, Committee Members, unless there is any objection, I am going to go to the presentation from the Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District (GLACVCD), so we can hear the complete range of mosquito conversation and dialogue. Then we will open up for questions. At this time, if we could have the presenters for the GLACVCD that are here on Zoom begin their presentation.

Susanne Kluh, General Manager, GLACVCD:

Thank you for the opportunity. We are happy to provide you with how our special District, one of the options Mr. Brown has suggested, might be a good one for Nevada. That is exactly what we are. We are a California Special District, and I am happy to hear there is statute in Nevada that would allow perhaps something similar for you all to be an option.

Let me go into how we are organized, what we are doing, and other things. After that, myself as well as my staff will be available for questions. ([Agenda Item IV B](#)) [Due to copyright issues, the presentation is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/About/Contact>.]

Our mission—we are working on restating it—is to reduce populations of public health vectors below nuisance levels. I will gladly admit that is one of the points we are momentarily not fully successful because we have the same problem with *Aedes aegypti* being all over Los Angeles (LA) County. It is a difficult-to-control mosquito and is mostly focused on biting people. They are a considerable nuisance despite our best efforts at this moment. We have also seen a dire prediction that Dave Brown made here for us. We have seen the first transmission of dengue locally in LA County late last season in two occasions where somebody brought it in from their travel and then transmitted it.

That gets right to our second bullet point: prevent human infection associated with mosquito transmitted disease. We always have West Nile virus cases, and now we are potentially having dengue cases, Zika, and chikungunya. Anybody can get on a plane and be in LA within a matter of hours. In all, we also try to prevent loss of property values and commercial enterprise as a result of vector occurrence. That usually responds a lot to some of our large nonbiting midge populations that we are also trying to keep at bay. When people are along the spreading grounds, as LA is trying to infiltrate as much water as possible from this winter and any winter storms, we have to make sure we protect our residents from the huge midge plumes that result. We are working closely with our water agencies to try to keep that nuisance to a minimum. It impacts meatpacking plants, bakeries, auto repair, and paint shops along the river when these large numbers of these insects emerge. That is the mission we are standing on. We are working on maybe new verbiage for that.

We have two locations officially, Santa Fe Springs and a satellite office in Sylmar. As you will see next, we have a huge district to cover, so we have two offices. We ran out of space for our Sylmar satellite office. Last year, we acquired a new facility for us to move in after this year's mosquito season and remodeling in Pacoima, which is not far. We are not able to cover the area we serve from one location.

Historically, you can see our District here, GLACVCD is the one in orange. It is the largest of five districts in LA County that are historically grown. We were formed in 1952. We currently serve 37 cities as well as areas of unincorporated LA County. Our District contains a little over 1 million parcels, a little over 1,000 square miles, and a little over 6 million residents—definitely a huge population we serve in this area. You can see how far drawn out our District is and that it makes sense to have a second office; so we are not traveling far every day.

Our powers derive from the *California Health and Safety Code*. That is our founding statute. Everything in there in terms of what needs to take place to form a district and how it should be organized basically derives from that. It gives us the powers to administer surveillance programs and conduct the appropriate studies of vector and vector-borne diseases. Then, as a result of that, take any and all necessary or proper actions to prevent the occurrence of vectors and vector-borne diseases. Last but not least, [it allows us to] take any and all necessary or proper actions to abate vector or vector-borne disease. We have an abatement ability. I would say it is written in the *California Health and Safety Code* a bit cumbersome. We can theoretically threaten residents with abatement. That would allow us access to any property we deem is producing vectors; allow us to potentially fine those property owners;

and abate any such vector problem and charge the property owner for those efforts. However, it is a cumbersome process where there are hearings and the resident or property owner gets time to correct the issue. In the meantime, we can have access to abate the problem. We have never used those powers to fine anyone. It usually resolves itself before we get there.

This is basically what we are properly authorized to do. We do a property inspection. We determine the presence of a nuisance. This can be a commercial property, a home, and private property. We also inspect a lot of public sources, such as flood control channels or underground storm drains. We are authorized to abate that nuisance either directly or by giving notice to the property owner and then determine if there has been compliance; if not, we can control these vectors and treat the property with the appropriate physical, chemical, or biological means. We will then charge the property owner for those services. If the abatement process goes to the fullest of its extent, if fines are not paid, liens can be placed on the property so when the property is sold the next time around, we would get reimbursed during escrow.

Our revenue source to fund our usual program is multifold. We have residential areas, we have little agricultural areas left, and commercial properties. Currently, our assessment rate cannot exceed \$20 total annually. We are preparing to go to Proposition 218, which has approved the \$20 limit for our services every year that our Board of Directors can assess to our property taxes in our service area of LA County. We are working on getting resident approval by the end of 2025 to increase that. As you can see, we are currently at \$18.89 per parcel for anything less than an acre residential, 5 acres of agricultural, and commercial parcels of 20 acres or less. We can charge an additional \$5.99 for additional acreage: 1 acre for residential; 5 acres for agricultural; and 20 acres for additional commercial—again, not to exceed \$20 unless we are nearing our cap. With the additional challenges of these Aedes mosquitoes, we are preparing to get voter approval hopefully in the fall of 2025 for higher assessments.

We also have a small area of a special assessment that came after the fact that deals with black fly control. Black flies emerge from running water rather than mosquitoes that emerge from standing water. We have had areas along the LA River that have huge problems with black flies. We created a one-mile buffer along the river that gets all this special treatment to have their black flies controlled. It is about 300,000 parcels, and we charge those parcels an additional \$0.30 annually. You can see from the list of cities and neighborhoods that it is a broad area.

We also get what is called ad valorem taxes. This was passed in 1978 with Proposition 13, which decided that property taxes be 1 percent of the full cash value of any real estate property plus an amount for local assessments—we assess \$18.89. If there has not been a change of ownership in the property ownership, every year the tax assessor is allowed to put an inflationary factor of 2 percent to that property. Of course, LA properties have increased in value by more than 2 percent annually. When the property is sold, the new value of the property that it has been sold for gets assessed. That dramatically increases the overall value that is assessed. We get a small percentage of that assessment amount. We are sharing it with lighting districts, cemetery districts—all sorts of people chip away at it every year, and we approve tax sharing resolutions. Nevertheless, because of the huge increase in property value in LA County, this amount is a good chunk of money that adds to our overall ability to serve.

Here is our organizational chart. We are overall supervised by a Board of Trustees. Every city appoints a trustee from their midst. We also have one city [trustee] for LA County

unincorporated that is appointed by the Board of Supervisors. There is myself, the General Manager; recently we created an assistant general manager position below me. From there, we have facilities and maintenance, scientific-technical—they do all the surveillance—and then of course, the core of our work in operations—all the folks that do all the mosquito control at all times. Under my Assistant General Manager, we brought together communications, finance, and human resources. As we have an ever-growing staff, the finance and human resources have become more important. As we are trying to reach our homeowners because of this new *Aedes aegypti* problem, our communications has also taken a significant role.

The Board, in terms of their responsibilities, is a 37-member Board. It is large. You can imagine people with various agendas, but we ask them to set their political agendas from their cities aside and come together only for the purpose of vector control and think of our District as a whole and what is in everybody's best interest consolidatedly instead of their city's best interest. They hire the General Manager, establish and approve the budget expenditures, set the appropriate assessment rate for that budget amount to be raised, and retain their own legal counsel.

We generated Board of Trustees policies. We have a Board meeting every second Thursday. I think theoretically, California Special Districts are allowed to have one every three months. We are meeting monthly. I think it makes for a better way to get all our items addressed, make policy, and move forward with the District's business. The Board gets a travel stipend to be reimbursed for their attendance that is set in the *Health and Safety Code*. The trustees themselves created an absentee policy, because for a while we had problems making quorum. Now they can only miss two consecutive meetings, and then they will get a warning saying "If you miss a third one, you are considered to have abandoned your position, and we will ask your city to appoint a new representative." We make sure they are in compliance with ethics trainings every two years—sexual harassment prevention trainings every two years. We have all of them fill out Form 700, so they can disclose any conflict of interest in terms of working as a Trustee on the Board.

We have 92 full-time staff. We have two part-time staff. During the season—I want to say during the summer, but it is not true anymore—from May through November is how our mosquito season fully runs. We try to hire 42 seasonal staff.

Our District departments we have structured—you saw some of it in our organizational chart—we have administration; we have operations. Those are the folks doing most of the control work. Scientific-technical are the people doing all our mosquito monitoring and submitting all our mosquitoes for testing, advising operations in terms of where treatments are necessary and prudent, as well as developing new control options for us. We are heavily looking into doing sterile insect technique as a control. We are planning to release sterilized male mosquitoes that are not biting because they do not need the protein in the blood meal to lay eggs. Male mosquitoes never bite; it is only the females. We are planning on sterilizing those males by irradiating them and releasing them to mate with the wild females and result in eggs that are not viable. Then of course, we will talk about our communications efforts as well.

Under the General Manager, we have the front office, fleet and maintenance, scientific-technical, our IT (Information Technology) folks, operations, and the assistant general manager.

We have our own maintenance staff. They do everything from maintaining our fleet and doing the necessary maintenance on the vehicles. They also fabricate our own changes to

the vehicles. You can see here on the side; we have these right-hand drive jeeps that have a little bracket where the spray wand is hanging from. We treat gutters with these vehicles. That way, we drive on the correct side closest to the gutter. They can inspect for mosquito presence and then treat. The way everything is set up is all developed in-house and then manufactured. We change all these vehicles according to what we need out of any given vehicle. Our maintenance staff makes sure everything is working well and safe. We have about 100 vehicles in our fleet.

We talked about scientific-technical. They do the in-the-field surveillance, set mosquito traps, identify the mosquitoes, work with the State hotline—California has a dead bird hotline. Residents will call in dead birds, and we will go pick them up, and they get tested by the State for West Nile virus. It is a good indicator of where our activity is high. All the mosquitoes we collect in our mosquito trapping all over also get together into a sample of up to 50 and are submitted for testing for West Nile virus, St. Louis encephalitis, western equine encephalomyelitis. We are not submitting a lot of mosquitoes checking for dengue. The number of positive mosquitoes on that front is so low it is not quite worth the money. Our traps are spaced out over our service area. We make sure we visit every trap site twice a month. That is what our surveillance is based on.

Then we have our Operations Department. Of course, they do all the checking. These are underground storm drains where we check. Then a lot of residential yard inspections, swimming pools that we get called in that are not maintained—all of those treatments—our Aedes Response Team goes to a lot of backyards. A lot of folks have water in places behind their shed or garage they have not seen in many years. We go and help them inspect their yards, so they can help themselves have fewer mosquitoes as well as treating all these public sources that we are aware of and large sources that have mosquitoes emerge.

Last but not least, our Communications Department, where everybody is big on outreach with social media. We go to a ton of community events. We have an education program that currently serves fifth graders, mostly. We go out to schools; schools can sign up. We try to educate our future residents with this. I think our mobile education unit makes a great impact on students. When they get to come on and be mosquito control scientists for themselves and learn about everything we might have to do. We go to community presentations. We try to be omnipresent on social media. We are still working on improving that.

That is a quick overview. I know I have not touched on a lot of things that are more organizational, like we have all our operational staff separated in zones. They get familiar with this area where they know every puddle until it dries up later in the summer. We have the specialized programs, like we treat flood control channels with vehicles that have hard rubber tires, so we do not get flats at any given time. There is a lot more, and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Chair Torres:

Thank you for the presentation. We have one more presentation in this category. We are going to invite Ms. Krista Jenkins, the District Manager of Douglas County Mosquito Abatement District. Please begin when you are ready.

Krista Jenkins, Manager, Douglas County Mosquito Abatement District:

Thank you for inviting me to speak in front of you today. Our District is within Douglas County. The population of Douglas County is somewhere between 49,000 and

50,000. We fall into that category of being small. After listening to the informative presentations before me, I feel a bit like a postage stamp on a large envelope, but I will try my best to give you an overshot of what we do as a small District, which in my opinion, is a lot. ([Agenda Item IV C-1](#)) ([Agenda Item IV C-2](#)) [Due to copyright issues, the presentation is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/About/Contact>.]

Our District is basically the Carson Valley. That is 455 square miles. Inside of our District, we have also created a working area which is predominantly unimproved pastures, a lot of irrigation, garlic, and some grains. On the interior of the District, we do have our suburban areas and small subdivisions. Somewhere toward the north side of our District, we have one- and five-acre parcel subdivisions. Within our District, there are also two areas we service outside of our District. We have a limited contract with Douglas County to service those areas. One of them is the Nevada side of Lake Tahoe, which runs from Stateline to Glenbrook. The other one is south of us, which includes a little bit of Topaz Lake and the surrounding community of Topaz Ranch Estates.

We have a five-person elected Board, two that have two-year terms and three that have four-year terms. We typically meet four times during the season and more if it deems necessary.

Funding—I think that is one of the things I am here to talk about to a certain extent. Douglas County is different than a lot of the other districts within Nevada. I cannot include Clark County on that, but we have over 17 different tax districts in our county. I am probably the third from the bottom of the rung, if you take into consideration the fire district, which has all of Douglas County. I am probably the second largest area that needs to be serviced, and I am at the bottom of the totem pole there. Our tax rate is 0.0345 percent. To put that in a bit of perspective, an average subdivision homeowner will pay somewhere between \$3 and \$5 a year for mosquito abatement. All the big ranches get a discount on their taxes. It takes all our District to pour their money into what we do. We also get revenue from consolidated taxes. We get interest from the local government investment pool and the limited contract with Douglas County. As an aside, because of our tax cap, we do not get any tax raises. The raises would come from new development. If any of the 17 districts folds, we would go into a tax grab. Since we are at the bottom, we get a miniscule amount of that. In the 17 years that I have been with the District, that has only happened one time.

Our District was thought about in 1968. Through the legal channels we became an NRS 318 improvement district.

The interesting story of how we became a District is there was a veterinarian that was in a rancher's pasture artificially inseminating some rancher's cows, and he was getting bit. He asked if there was any way we could start some kind of control. After we went through the legal channels, that is how we became and were born a District. Subsequently, that veterinarian and that rancher were on our Board for many years.

We started with literally a dipper and a box. A gentleman was a schoolteacher and would do mosquito control in the summers. His basic products for treatment were larvicide briquettes, a lot of larvicide oil, and a crop duster that he contracted to do adulticide applications.

He started out with one Ford Bronco. Currently today, we have seven trucks, four foggers, four side-by-side ground equipment, one all-terrain vehicle (ATV), a boat with a mud motor, and two treatable drones.

Surveillance is one aspect of our program. We go into all areas of Douglas County within our District, including the two outside of our District, looking for standing water in any way, shape, or form. We do trap to look for adult populations.

Our season basically runs from March through October. It is totally weather dependent. Sometimes we can start earlier; sometimes we end up going later. In Douglas County, we do not have any reservoir systems. All the water we rely on for our agricultural community comes from the mountains. We rely heavily on the snowpack. Even in our worst drought we had a few years ago, we are never out of water because a lot of the bigger ranches have pumps, and they are constantly pumping water. We always have something to do. At least twice a month, if not more, I try to hire a plane to fly the Valley so I can survey the whole area from above. I look for irrigation water patterns. I look for areas that are flooded as far as irrigation. It saves a bit of time, so our ground crew does not have to go in there. They can go specifically to other areas that need immediate attention. When we do get flood runoff from the snowpack, I can monitor the flood patterns, have a better idea, and make better decisions on when we need to enter those to start surveying them. Not only do we treat standing water in the agricultural area, we also treat detention ponds, retention ponds, catch basins, and private ponds. We have an extensive ditch system that services the irrigation along with many sloughs. We have two major rivers that run through our Valley. We set traps to monitor the adult populations. I will get into trapping in a few minutes. We also respond to service requests.

Regarding our technology, we have a cloud-based program called FieldSeeker. That captures all our data from our surveillance to our trapping and to our ground crew for our treatments and our drones. It is a cloud-based program. Each employee does have an application on their phone. They can put in the data that is required, whether it is a site visit or a treatment, to give us a better activity of what is happening in the area. I also use it for reporting.

Larvicide is probably the biggest part of our program. We use several different products. They range with residual from 7 days up to 30 days in the waters we use basically out in the pastures. The other products are called briquettes, and they have a residual of anywhere from 30 days up to 180 days. We determine what kind of water we are dealing with, and that will determine what product goes into the water. We do this by ground. We do this by hand. We do this with our ground equipment with granular applicators. With ponds, we go on our boat with our mud motor. We also have two treating drones we treat from the air. We contract services with a helicopter and a fixed-wing also.

Trapping is important to our District because we do have such an agricultural area. There are over 66,000 acres we have to try and monitor and/or treat. We test for West Nile virus, St. Louis encephalitis, and western and equine encephalitis. We trap four nights a week and usually set ten traps per night. Currently, when we gather our traps, we identify the mosquitoes. Then we have them sent to the Nevada Department of Agriculture for testing. Depending on the timing of getting the traps to the State and then getting the turnaround from the State on a result, sometimes that can be a few days; sometimes it can be a week. On occasion, it has taken us a week and a half to get our results. We are going into two new types of technology this year. We are going to get a mosquito identify machine. We have over 16 different species in Nevada. We feel with this machine and all the great technology it is going to offer we will ensure we are getting the correct species identification to be

tested. Also, our goal is to purchase—after the first of July—a polymerase chain reaction (Codex PCR) machine, so we will have the capability of doing our own testing, and we can have an approximate 60-minute turnaround. What that means to us is instead of having maybe a week to a week and a half turnaround to see if there is any virus in our mosquitoes, we can have a pretty fast idea of what virus may be running throughout our county. It will offer us a much quicker response time.

Our adulticide program consists of using our ground foggers in all the subdivisions and outlying areas. We also use one of our drones that has adulticide capability. We contract with a fixed-wing aircraft to do big aerial portions of our valley. We use several types of adulticide, and we rotate them to ensure we are not having any resistance problems with mosquitoes. Our paper for Douglas County comes out two days a week, but we do have online access every day to post any type of adulticide event we are going to do. If people do not have online or they do not read the paper, the other way we do it is through our social media presence. Then I go around to each subdivision, and we locate signs at all the entrances to make sure people are aware of the time and date we are coming in.

Mosquito abatement is an expensive endeavor. Last year, in product alone for our small District, we spent over \$400,000 in product itself. We treated close to 4,700 acres of ground, and we flew adulticide events of over 27,000 acres.

To give you a snapshot of cost and to break it down a little bit more, our larvicides we use run anywhere from \$13 to \$20 a pound. That rate for application is anywhere from five to eight pounds per acre. If you do calculations at the high rate, that would mean one acre could cost \$160. If you take a one-hundred acre parcel, that could be \$16,000. If you do four months of application at up to 30 days of residual, that one acre now becomes \$64,000. Adulticides are a little bit different. The adulticides we use run anywhere from \$85 to \$350 per gallon. We have to convert that to ounces because the rate for adulticide, on average, is about an ounce per acre. At the high rate, one acre is going to cost \$2.73. One hundred acres is going to be \$273, and so on and so forth. It is a bit less of a cost, but you have to understand we do not have, with adulticide applications, the luxury of having a 30-day window. This is per event. There are a lot of variable conditions that create and make sure we have a successful adulticiding event. That is mostly derived from weather, whether it is temperature, inversion, wind, and time of application. We do many events throughout the season.

Before I sign off, I want to make sure you understand that no matter what side of the coin you are on regarding climate change, the fact of the matter is there are areas that are heating up in this world, including Nevada. Heat drives the life cycle of the mosquito and heat drives the virus. We do not currently, in Northern Nevada, have to deal with the invasive species as these other presenters have offered, but we never know when that may happen, as certain mosquito species may adapt to our climate. I truly believe Clark County does need a mosquito abatement program. I think it is important that gets started because we are all in this for public health and public safety. We all try to work together to make people understand it is not our entities that do the work; it takes people to also help do the work and the community work together to make the program successful. Thank you for your time and attention. I am available for questions.

Chair Torres:

At this time, we will begin our questions. Members, do you have any questions? Do you have any in Northern Nevada?

Assemblyman Carter:

This is for Mr. Brown. I am looking at your map, and it appears we finally found something bad that does not get dumped in my District. We have the worst air quality in the Valley. We have the worst traffic in the Valley and everything else, but apparently mosquitoes do not like the east side of Las Vegas. It is around the base of Sunrise Mountain and clear over around to Lake Las Vegas. That incorporates the wetlands park that has a lot of slow-moving water and back pools. I am wondering why we do not see any dots. I am glad, but why do we not see any dots over there?

Mr. Brown:

I think you need to recognize what those dots represent. They represent the finding of *Aedes aegypti* mosquito. That is the invasive mosquito. You actually have a fair amount of mosquitoes within your District; they are simply a different species. You have the *Anopheles* species or the *Culex*, which is responsible for the transmission of West Nile virus. I am pretty sure you have those there. The map is only representing the invasive species I presented here. If I were to represent all the mosquitoes, the map would be covered with black dots.

Chair Torres:

I have a couple of questions. We have permission for mosquito districts to exist here in the State of Nevada as it stands right now. I am trying to understand, and perhaps a representative from Douglas County can speak a bit more about what the issues are with ensuring we are providing these services? Obviously, some communities have opted to provide fuller services than others. I know here in Southern Nevada, it does not have the whole body of services that it seems Douglas County does. If you can speak to why that issue might exist.

Ms. Jenkins:

If I am understanding the question properly, within Northern Nevada, there are other improvement districts that do mosquito and vector control. Washoe County works within their Health Department for their portion. Churchill County has quite an extensive program. The City of Fernley runs it through the City. Mason Valley, which is in Yerington, has a small abatement program. There are a few Tribes up here in Northern Nevada that have abatement programs. Most of the Districts and the programs around here have been running for quite a while. We are under the auspice of the Department of Taxation, and that is what drives what we can and cannot do as far as raising any extra revenue. In Nevada, we do not have an association, but we do have what we call the West Nile Working Group; Clark County is included in that. That was originally developed when West Nile first started to come into Nevada, which was around 2005 and 2006. That was formed if any other entity needed help, if they had a breakout, we are all available to come and help them. I am not sure if I answered your question, but we all take our job seriously. I can attest that in the beginning when West Nile was here, it was rampant. It is still here. We never know when we are going to have any virus. My uncle contracted in 2007 the West Nile virus encephalitis. I can tell you from firsthand experience, it is not anything I would even want to wish on my worst enemy.

Chair Torres:

Thank you for your work on this, Ms. Jenkins. I think it is a unique issue here in the State of Nevada. It is something we are seeing more of here in Southern Nevada. It was mentioned

earlier in our presentations it is an issue we have to address. I am trying to understand specifically what is the level of funding Douglas County receives right now? I know you mentioned that number cannot change, which is something, as Legislators, we can look at this upcoming session if we would like. How much money do they receive right now? Do you know how that compares to other areas? I know Mr. Brown can speak more to Southern Nevada.

Ms. Jenkins:

Our funding is basically ad valorem, the consolidated taxes, our interest from Local Government Investment Pool (LGIP), and our contract revenue—which I need to revisit with Douglas County because, currently, it is at \$21,000 for the year. We are finding we are spending more money because costs are going up. My budget for the expenditures for this coming season has been determined to be between \$800,000 and \$900,000. I cannot speak to any other district in the area; I would like to know that information, but as far as I am concerned, my concentration is for my District only. Washoe County has a completely different type of funding.

Mr. Brown:

I am not sure I can speak to what the funding capabilities are here in Southern Nevada. I do know ad valorem taxes tend to be one of the more significant funding mechanisms for agencies, particularly in California, Florida, and other states that have effective mosquito control programs. It tends to become a local issue. There are some published papers—particularly one that came out of Texas that identified what the residents were willing to pay for effective mosquito control programs. It needs to become a local issue, at least in my opinion, because many of the mosquitoes are going to be identified from the local municipality where they are trying to be addressed. The paper identified residents who were willing to pay a minimum of \$20 per resident for effective mosquito control within the community. I think, at least here in Las Vegas, I have not been able to identify what would be necessary for that. I do know that an agency existed here in Clark County, I believe in 2002. For whatever reason, it was disbanded or broken apart. Why that happened, I do not have the information on that. I do know based on the two presentations by both of these mosquito control agency Directors, you need a dedicated and directed program to effectively have good mosquito control in the area.

Chair Torres:

That brings me to my final question for the GLACVCD. I think you all have a model for how local governments can work together to target the issue of mosquitoes in our community. I am wondering if you could talk more about how the organization came to be, whether your State requires that agency to exist, or if it is permissive like it is here in the State of Nevada. How you have overcome what we see in Southern Nevada, and probably throughout most of the State—this is what the Health District does, that is what the City does, this is what the County does, and everybody has their own plans, agencies, and programs they are implementing, but they are not working together.

Ms. Kluh:

I can speak to that. We do not have a mandate for a mosquito control district. Large swathes of California are covered by mosquito control districts. For example, our Local Agency Formation Commission here in LA County was interested in having all of LA County covered one way or another by a vector control district. They have extensively worked on researching areas that have no vector control and make sure they get annexed into one of

the five vector control districts. Our District emerged on the southern portion of the LA River because of the mosquitoes that were emerging from the river and the flooding at the time—before the river was fully improved. The residents have taken action and demanded a district to form, so a small program was formed. Once we had the district established, it was a matter of time. We started with a few cities. More and more cities joined the program and were organically grown. Some of the other areas, like the west side along the coast, residents there decided they needed their own program and created their own district because they thought we were overall too large. Portions of our San Gabriel Valley decided to split from us and provide separate services and create their own vector control districts. Districts are different. Some of them, for example, our neighbor to the south in Orange County, are a full-service district. They also do rodent control, flea control, and surveillance for ticks and things, while we are most focused on black flies, mosquitoes, and non-biting mitch swarms. We also have a Health Department that has a vector control program, the LA County Health Department. They are focusing on flea surveillance, tick surveillance; things we do not provide. That is a little bit about the historically grown part of how this is all organized.

We work all together very well. We work a lot with our local health departments. We work with our neighboring districts. We work closely with acute communicable disease under LA County Health Department. Long Beach has their own Health Department. We work with them for the report of cases of vector-borne diseases such as West Nile virus. Now that we had dengue, we get informed, and then we work together on trying to prevent further infections. The collaboration on a countywide basis is intense. Something I did not mention before, for a program our size—we have a sizable number of visitors coming into LA County every year as well with Hollywood, theme parks, and all of these things—there is a lot of travel related as well as we have a diverse population of residents that go back to areas to visit family and friends that are currently dengue endemic. We have a lot of different diseases coming back with both visitors and residents into our area. Our current budget is in the low \$24 million for a district our size to do the things we do. I hope that answers your question.

Chair Torres:

I appreciate that. I would not want to repel anyone from asking more questions. Senator Daly has a question in Carson City.

Senator Daly:

I have a quick question. Maybe someone can expand it, or maybe all three of you can talk about it. Not too long ago here in Northern Nevada, in Washoe County, there was an outbreak. The County advertised people, "We are going to be spraying to try to control this." We had pushback from people saying, "You cannot spray in my neighborhood. What is it going to do to my dog?" and everything under the sun. I was curious how much communication with the public there is on the effects? When I was a kid, they used to do the misting, and you could smell it. Obviously, it did not kill anybody. It killed the mosquitoes though. I would say on the other side of that, in my career when I was working in construction, and we worked out at the Valmy Power Station [North Valmy Generating Station]. It was a particularly wet year, and they did not have any controls. If you do not have the controls and you have a wet year, those mosquitoes can be overwhelming. They can cause harm other than the possible diseases. You have a swarm of 80, 90, 100 mosquitoes, and you are the only target—it is an unpleasant situation.

Ms. Jenkins:

As far as my comment on the adulticiding you were referring to, we do use—and most districts and entities use—ultra-low volume. To break that down—a lot of people do say, “My God, you came over, and you went through, and there is pesticide everywhere.” In reality, one shot glass full of chemical can treat one acre. Ultra-low volume means the droplets are measured in microns. By law, we calibrate our machines every year. To put it in perspective, if you take a human hair, that is the size of the droplet; they are measured in 18 to 30 microns. They are small, and they dissipate quickly. That is why the timing of the event is important. As far as pushback from Douglas County residents, we do a lot on education. I answer every single phone call that comes into our District, as with emails. When we do our service requests, if somebody does not want to be fogged for whatever reason in the community, we create a no-fog zone within our mapping system on our computers. What that means is our driver goes into the subdivision, and when we come against that address, we put a 300-foot buffer completely around that address. An alarm goes off, the system shuts down, we drive through that portion of the no-fog zone, then the system comes back on. We try as best we can to make sure we honor those requests for people for whatever reason, whether it is they do not like pesticide, environmentally, or if they have health concerns.

As far as notifying the community that we are coming in, people rely on those signs. I did make a mistake one time because I ran out of time, and I did not get the sign up. One of the gentlemen that was in fogging that night got a nice little earful. I addressed that complaint the next day. I told the lady—and I will stick to it—that will never happen. In our little community, that is the best way we can inform people. To let them know how the adulticide works, what the ramifications are, make Safety Data Sheet (SDS), and our labels available to them, so they can fully understand, and listen to their requirements, their complaints, their concerns, so we keep a good, positive presence in our Valley.

Senator Daly:

I wanted to get it on the record that all the precautions are taken. If mosquitos went untreated or unchecked, it is probably worse. If the people were not getting the benefit of everybody else not complaining, they might change their tune. Thank you for the explanation. We know it is safe. We know it works. We should not be afraid of it.

Mr. Brown:

If I may add to that, all the pesticides used by mosquito control agencies are registered by the Environmental Protection Agency to identify any potential risks that may be involved with their treatment. After the registration process is complete, it has been demonstrated the product can be used with minimum risk. You cannot say there is absolutely no risk because me taking a drink of water out of this cup, I may have a risk of swallowing it incorrectly. However, the pesticides that are registered for use by mosquito control agencies have been demonstrated to be effective and pose no significant risk to the human population.

Chair Torres:

Thank you. Members, are there any additional questions? I do not believe there are any more.

Ms. Jenkins:

If I may make one more comment. This has to do with the ad valorem. I would love to be able to raise my ad valorem tax because I am always scrounging for money. Because of the tax cap, that does not necessarily happen. I think one thing that should be understood within Nevada is if a district is wanting to be created, it is going to take a vote of the people to want to be able to have to raise their taxes or include another type of tax item to their property taxes. We do have areas in Northern Nevada where there is a community that does not want their taxes raised. It is an agricultural community. I can say with assurance there have been several people that have gotten serious West Nile virus. Even though they understand mosquitoes do pose a risk, including death, because of the tax raises, they are adamantly against raising any taxes. I think when we talk about ad valorem, all those considerations need to be understood. Mostly because they have to vote, or they should be able to vote, from my understanding, on whether or not that needs to happen.

Chair Torres:

Assemblyman Gurr, did you have a question?

Assemblyman Gurr:

I was sitting here listening to the whole presentation. It sounds to me like Las Vegas has issues with Clark County, and it sounds to me like they are uncoordinated in their efforts and what they need to do. It sounds like Washoe and Douglas and the counties that are impacted on a lesser level have districts that are joined together with their cities. To me, it sounds like Clark County needs to get the cities in Clark County together and form a district and go after the bugs.

Chair Torres:

I know there have been complaints about there not being coordinated efforts between the cities and the counties within that area. I think it is a greater conversation we can have. I agree though, strikingly, maybe because Southern Nevada has not always had so many mosquitoes here. This is a new issue for us. If you were around last fall and getting bit ten times a day, there are a lot of complaints in our community. It was all over the news too. Everybody was like, "What, there are mosquitoes?" I do not usually get bit by mosquitoes. My dad is from Central America, and when I go back, I never get bit by any mosquito there. But here in Las Vegas, I was getting five bites a day. That is how this conversation came to be. I know there is going to continue to be more conversation about that as a community over the next couple of years, as we try to combat this issue that is new to our part of the State. To all the presenters, thank you for making time for us today.

AGENDA ITEM V—OVERVIEW OF RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE NEVADA NATIONAL GUARD

[This agenda item was taken out of order.]

Chair Torres:

We are going to move on to the next item, the overview of recent activities of the Nevada National Guard. Presenting today will be Major General Ondra Berry, the Adjutant General of the Nevada National Guard, Office of the Military. When you are ready, you may begin.

Ondra Berry, Adjutant General, Nevada National Guard, Office of the Military:

Good afternoon, Committee on Government Affairs, Madam Chair. I will give you an update, talk about what we are looking at next, and then open up for questions. ([Agenda Item V](#)) [Due to copyright issues, the presentation is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or <https://www.leg.state.nv.us/Division/Research/About/Contact>.]

First of all, we have a new Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General C.Q. Brown. One of the things he talks about is our ability to work closely with our communities. He talks about how critical that is. We live in an extremely dangerous world. I think everybody knows the Guard has three roles. First of all, we do the war fight, then we have the homeland, then we have strong State partnerships. We have three State partnerships with Tonga, Fiji, and Samoa. There is a State Partnership Conference being held out of Lake Las Vegas. We were out there earlier today. The strength of our military is the ability to have strong partnerships with our community. Our work we do in Nevada, the work we do with our legislators, the work we do with our community, matters. One of our strategic priorities is care for airmen, soldiers, their families, and their employers. I want to point out how critical it is, so I appreciate the opportunity to come here today to give you an update of who we are.

As a reminder, first and foremost, the National Guard provides trained, ready, and resilient soldiers and airmen to protect the United States and its interests, both domestically and abroad. We add to that, our vision is providing hope and service to our communities, states, and nations with safety, unity, and integrity. We put a lot into that as an organization.

I want to throw out briefly what is going on today with your Nevada National Guard. Currently, we are posturing to send over 200 of our soldiers to deploy to the Middle East, going to Kuwait. This is probably the largest contingent of soldiers we have sent overseas in a long time. We recently had approximately 25 of our soldiers return from Kuwait. We went in conjunction with the California National Guard. To tie into what is going on in the State—a lot of people ask me about how the Guard helps with things like fentanyl—we have had over 1 million drugs seized in the last six months through our Counter Drug Task Force, and this is through our State mission. Because of the efforts—especially of our Congressional Delegations (CODELs)—we have added four additional members to our Counter Drug team, so we can put additional work—not just in terms of prevention and intervention, but we also can put them in the schools. Three major events, which I am sure a lot of people hear about, that the Guard has supported is the Super Bowl, which was right here in Las Vegas; F1 right here in Las Vegas; and New Year's Eve right here in Las Vegas. We love working the State Active Duty assignments. We are presently preparing for what we call the MAFFS, which is the Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems. That gives us the ability, when activated, to assist in fighting wildfires here in Nevada. We tend to spend most of our time over in California because we have been safe in terms of firefighters over the last few years. Our STARBASE Program—we have one in Henderson, and we have one in Northern Nevada in our airbase. Over 2,000 Nevada students have been served in this program. This is the STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) program for fifth graders. We bus them from their elementary schools to our site. The STARBASE Henderson site we are expanding—adding another classroom. We are hopeful, if we get federal funding, to add one to our Speedway Armory, so we can service more of our fifth graders. Our high school, the Battle Born Youth Challenge Academy, is in Carlin, Nevada. We heavily encourage anybody that wants a student to go to a high school that needs additional structure, credit recovery, and to graduate from high school to go to that academy.

This slide is the different statuses we work as the Nevada National Guard. When we talk about State Active Duty, we are talking about when you are activated for the F1 or the Super Bowl or New Year's Eve. Also, State Active Duty statuses—Counter Drugs, Civil Support Teams, STARBASE, Youth ChalleNGe—are the programs that directly impact the citizens in the State of Nevada. When you see us, when we are on Title 10, that is when we are getting deployed or when they are working up at National Guard Bureau (NGB). Those are the different statuses we have. Title 32 is what we work on a day-to-day basis. I always remind people this: in times of peace, we work for the Governor. In times of war, we work for the President of the United States. When they deploy, they are under Title 10 status working for the President. On the day-to-day, they are Title 32.

There was a recent article in the newspaper talking about what some of our efforts are in terms of sexual assault, sexual harassment. It is something we take extremely serious as an organization. This is how I define culture: what is the worst behavior you will tolerate or accept as a leader in your organization? If we turn our back on any service member, we betrayed them. We do not tolerate those in our ranks who would bring harm to their brothers and sisters in arms.

When we talk about that, here is the way forward for us. First of all, we have had an increase in the Department of Public Health counselors. Over the last two sessions, you have given us mental health specialists. This upcoming session, I will talk about what our ask will be. Also, Ms. Randel, who is our Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, sits on a national committee, so we get direct responsibilities, updates, and requirements from the National Guard Bureau (NGB) because of her efforts. [She is] heavily engaged and involved. On a biannual basis, we put out a blotter report. This is to be transparent to the entire Force. We also send it to the Governor's Office. I would be glad to send it to anybody that would like to have that to show any misconduct and what the penalty was for that misconduct. We let our soldiers and airmen know if you do anything that goes against our policies, procedures, or laws, we will publish that, and we will make it available to anyone who wants to see it.

Also, we have a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Public Safety (DPS). We do not do our own investigations. If there is an allegation of a sexual assault or sexual harassment, we do not do those. We farm those out to DPS to make sure we stay objective. I have no input into their investigation. We take the findings that come back and respond to those. We do partnerships with our DPS. I have an open-door policy; if any soldier, airman, or civilian asked to come in and see me, they have the ability to come and do that, but we do ask them to make sure they have exhausted talking to their respective chain of command.

We have a Comprehensive Integrated Primary Prevention Plan. There are five positions we have from the federal government. We acquired a position to get an additional lawyer to work with us. They do regular assessments and are preventive about going out to the Force. Recently, we did what we call a Defense Organizational Climate Survey (DEOCS) through the NGB. Through all the services, you are required to do a yearly survey to assess the climate of your Force. Based off that, we have to develop responses to anything that comes out, and how we will respond to it as a Force. Every senior leader signs that. Every three months, I look to make sure we have a good dashboard that holds us accountable to that.

We have a monthly case management group that meets. I lead those efforts. We look at every single allegation of sexual assault or sexual harassment. Fortunately, over the last year, we have gotten to—these are my words—it has become one of the most boring

meetings ever, because we have done a pretty good job of making sure we have eliminated and have been assertive and aggressive about taking care of those items that could be tension for the Force. We also look at anything related to equal opportunity or any complaints that may come out of that. Something we are proud of is over the last two years, 30 percent of our recruits coming into the Nevada National Guard are now female soldiers, airmen, and civilians. If you compare that to the rest of the nation, we are in the top five of that population coming in, which I think is a testament to the work we have done and the trust and confidence we gained in that population.

As my grandmother used to say, "If I had 10,000 tongues, I could not say thank you enough" for the work you have done in terms of how you supported the military, what you provided for us in the ability to do our domestic and global mission, and what you provided to our soldiers, airmen, and civilians.

The last slide gives a recap in terms of what we have accomplished over the last five years. Probably the biggest things—if you look across the country and they ask, or you hear things, like recruiting is down in the military. We are the top five in the nation of recruiting. If you look at retention, we are in the top five in the nation in retention. If you look at force structure, we are in the midst of negotiations of—without getting too public—probably gaining force structure of almost 800 people. We found out yesterday there is a potential to pick up another 50. This is on the Army side for those positions. We found out yesterday we have the potential to pick up another 50 positions. We gained what is called a Tactical Air Control Party (TACP) Unit that is going to be working out in Nellis. We are a growth organization. When they look at the health of the force—which are the integrated prevention positions responsible for that—we are healthy as an organization. I like to point out the reason why we are able to gain more force structure is because some states cannot maintain their existing missions. We are looking to grow.

If you ask us, "What will we look for the next session?" I can tell you it is as simple as we are going to be looking for our capital improvement plan (CIP) projects. In order for us to grow as an organization, our infrastructure has to grow—building facilities, improvements—because we are busting at the seams now that we are bringing in additional force structure. The biggest thing is going to be our CIP projects. The other thing we are going to ask for is probably behavioral health. We are going to ask for two positions. We have quadrupled our positions as it relates to behavioral health over the last four years, but that is still an area that people are coming and asking for assistance. We encourage them to talk; we encourage them to seek help. We wanted to take away some of the misconceptions about what it means to seek help. If you think about it, you can literally be a 17-year-old going to a prom, playing soccer, doing all the things you do in high school, and a year later you can be in the middle of a conflict somewhere overseas. To throw those pressures on young people—and we are a young force—we want to make sure we have the resources, and they have someone to go talk to. If you talk to our mental health specialists, they are not lacking for not having enough to do. That is one of the things we will talk about.

We have a course we created called Purple Resolve. It is a two-day course where we hit heavily on resiliency. We open it up to our service members; they can bring their spouses or family members to it. We encourage that. If anybody here would like to go, if you want a condensed course, we encourage that. Our Financial Office will be going through the course with her people soon. We really open it up. That course has been adopted by about ten states around the nation to include the NGB. It was our way of looking at not just the skills and tools our members learn, but the heart and mind. We studied hard the ideations that people have as a result of the struggles they have in their life.

We probably will be asking for additional cyber positions, because one of the things we learned is if you look at how wars are going to be fought in the future, all they have to do is take down our systems; as opposed to coming and attacking us, and it throws everything off. We have a pretty good Cyber Force Protection Team that we have worked on now. We are ramping that up. It is not a matter of if, it is a matter of when we get attacked. You hear about it all the time throughout the nation. We want to make sure we put up better defenses and get more preventive and proactive.

Something else we will ask for is—not too long ago, we had a soldier that was on State Active Duty working at a Battle Born Youth Challenge Academy. They got killed in an accident. What we learned is your State Active Duty benefits, as it relates to workers compensation and what your dependents can receive, is not the same as you get on the federal level. We are going to come and ask if we can match those benefits in the event there is serious injury or death that occurs while they are on State Active Duty. If you are not in a federal status, you do not get the same benefits if there is a death as you do in a State Active Duty status. That family is struggling now. We have had a lot of help from agencies, but if it was equal right now, they would not be going through those challenges.

We are probably going to be also asking for an exception to always having to go to Public Works to expedite when we have CIP projects. If we get the funding, being limited to working with them versus possibly—especially if it is cost-effective—the ability to go to a private contractor to expedite our facilities being worked faster. We have heard that has been done with other agencies. Keep in mind, you are probably going to see, if I had to guess, between 15 and 20 CIP projects. The reason why they will be asked is because of the enormous growth we are having. I am in the middle of the negotiations with California and the NGB about how to acquire additional positions—almost 800. If they gave them to us today, we would not have anywhere to house them. They would have to stay in place versus bringing them to Nevada.

One of the things I look forward to next session is to bring you the economic impact of your Nevada National Guard. It is tremendous. As we were looking at what the growth does in terms of how we have an impact in our State, in terms of the salaries, benefits, housing, et cetera, I think it was a big miss on our part. I have to do better about educating this Body about what we do, and what we bring to the State.

We are probably going to ask for a position that we call an Assistant Adjutant General, which would be an assistant to me, but in a State status. Why that is important is because on a federal level, you cannot work on things for the State. I can literally bring a military conference in here every month, which would have an impact to our State, but we do not have the resources to work on it. We have a State Partnership Conference here. Over the last three years, we held two National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) Conferences here which brought over 3,500 people. The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States Conference is going to be coming here next year. If I had a position, one of the responsibilities would be to work on that with the convention authorities of the north and the south. We could bring military conferences here all day long. We can be a force multiplier in areas that can help our economy here.

I am hoping everybody got the newsletter we sent out. I like to send it out once a quarter to give you the—please tell me you got this or if you did not—we try to send out a quarterly newsletter that gives you an update. It is a one-pager to give you a status of how we are doing. We offer civic leader flights. I do not know if I have seen all of you on them. We ask you to come on one of our helicopters and see what we do. We like to show our mission. If anybody wants to go, please let us know, and we will get it to you; go up and see the

Valley; they love to talk about and show you what they do. These are people who are, we like to say, battle-born, battle-tested, and battle-ready. We like to show you that not only can we take care of the homeland, but these are people who go downrange and take care of this great nation. You cannot have a great nation unless you have a great military—impossible. As you look at what is going on in the world today, it is critical we do everything we can to ensure these soldiers, airmen, and civilians are ready in case anything comes up. That is why we use, “Always Ready, Always There.” Thank you and I stand by for your questions.

Chair Torres:

Do you have any questions in Northern Nevada?

Senator Daly:

Thank you for the presentation, General Berry. One of my questions is about the National Guard active status. You have the State Active Duty Title 32 and Title 10. I wanted to understand better the State versus federal hierarchy/jurisdictions. I know you are on Active Duty, I believe with the federal government. That is where your pay comes from, I think. You can correct me if I am wrong. You were talking about having a potential State paid assistant. Can you explain the separation there? When I look at the *Nevada Constitution*, I believe it is Article 5, Section 5, it says, “The Governor shall be Commander in Chief of the Military forces of this State except when they shall be called into the service of the United States.” Explain that a little bit.

Major General Berry:

If you look at our soldiers and airmen, I am the only State employee. The majority of them are on what is called “Title 32.” Their pay comes from the federal government. The Governor is the Commander in Chief, but they should not do State missions, which is why when you look at that slide, those are the State missions we work on a daily basis: the Counter Drug Task Force, even though their salary is covered by federal; the Civil Support Team, they work a State mission; STARBASE is 100 percent federally funded, but they are State employees; Youth Challenge, you pay a 25 percent/75 percent match—75 percent from the feds, 25 percent from the State; Defense Support to Civil Authorities (DSCA) is more tied into the Department of Emergency Management, but when they go to the Super Bowl; F1; and New Year’s Eve; we put them on State Active Duty, and that comes out of the State coffers—the State pays for those. The majority of time our people are on Title 32. If they are activated for a federal mission, then they are on Title 10. Again, both of those are paid by the federal government.

If you are paying attention to what is going on in the nation today, in terms of border security or when legislatures want to put together laws determining when our military members can be activated, you have to be careful of that because that comes out of the federal funds. If you look at our airplanes, helicopters, all our equipment, all of that is paid for by the feds. If you look at the Army, all the armories are on State land—except on the Air side. On the Army side, it is all State land. I have to be careful about if a soldier, airman does something. I have to ensure I look at their status because they have different rights. One of the things not on here is Title 5. Those are people in plainclothes, but again, federally funded. If the Governor would—let us say there is civil unrest, and they need the Guard to support Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department (LVMPD) or Reno Police, they would be on State Active Duty, and that is funded by the State. The majority of time when you see people in uniform, they are on Title 32 being paid by the feds. When I leave the

State, I am in a federal status. My day-to-day salary is covered by the State. When I go out of the State, that is my federal salary. I am the only uniformed person, which is why I asked for that position because they cannot do certain State responsibilities because of their status. I hope that makes sense.

Senator Daly:

It does. I have a follow-up. I remember the bill from last session where we changed that; I am sorry I had it backward. It gives you more flexibility to be on the State. When you are out of state, you revert to the other—it gives you that status. Thank you for the explanation on the State Active Duty, where the money comes from, and what those types of things are.

If an active disaster is declared, you would be eligible for federal funds to reimburse that, but it would have to be declared. I do pay attention and listen to what is going on across the country—border security. The Idaho Governor sent some of the National Guard for Idaho down to Texas. I am not exactly sure how that is, but that would be all State funded. One of the things that might have held us back when they said, “We do not have the money for that,” because I know our current Governor signed in support of what Governor Abbott is doing in Texas. It is a sad state of affairs when we would have that conflict. I was trying to get the hierarchy and understand where the funding comes from and where bottlenecks come in on responsibilities for that.

If I can, Madam Chair, comment on one of the legislation items you might have been thinking about on your Public Works. I have heard a lot of complaints over the years about the State Public Works Board, although they do fine work. The only one I am aware of that does not use State Public Works for the buildings is the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE). They have a whole Department that does the design, the procurement, and all that. I do not know if you have that. On the other side—I do not think you would have an issue with—the only thing State Public Works then does at the end is they are the building official for the job. They are the ones that issue the final certificate of occupancy. I do not know if you have the infrastructure like the University System does to procure, design, and do all the other things. I am sure we will see a bill next session.

Major General Berry:

We do have a good FMNO staff. Let me tell you, our working with them has gotten much better. It is not a complaint, but when we get so many federal funds, and we are trying to execute on those funds in a timely manner, that is one of the things we want to look at. It should be more of a secondary versus the primary. If the State Public Works cannot or does not have the ability to do it; that is what we would ask, because they should be the primary organization that we work with.

Senator Daly:

Understood. We had the same thing with the University. They said, we do not want to be underneath them. There was a compromise that was made, but the State Public Works insisted, and I agree, they should remain as the building official for State buildings. They were cool with that. I am sure we will be able to work something out. I wanted to understand that hierarchy of State versus federal and what can, should, and should not be done. I appreciate it, thank you.

Major General Berry:

It confuses me too.

Chair Torres:

Assemblyman Gurr, did you have a question? Then I will go to Assemblyman D'Silva.

Assemblyman D'Silva:

Thank you, Chair. General, it is always good seeing you, sir. I have a two-part question. One, you were mentioning hosting military conferences here in Las Vegas. I was wondering if you could give us an overview as to what types of conferences—maybe military or civil affairs—do you think would be appropriate for us to host here in Las Vegas? I think it is a great idea. Secondly, I had a question about the size of the Guard—the Air National Guard as well as the Army National Guard. How are we doing with recruitment? Are there any issues with recruitment, retention, so on and so forth?

Major General Berry:

There are over 1,000 military organizations in the nation today. We have discovered they like to come to Nevada, but the infrastructure is not there to support them. Many times, they want to work with a military organization. When I was doing the research on this, I looked at the top 20 military organizations in the country. This ties to NGAUS—I am talking about the Guard right now—Enlisted Association [of the National Guard of the United States], the Military Officers Association [of America], the Association of the United States Army. When you start looking at those organizations, they have said they would love to come here and do business with Nevada. It does not take away from someone who is a civilian or who may not have as much knowledge, but you can easily expedite some of the logistics of knowing the types of things they like to have here. We took on the NGAUS Conference in 2021, in three months because at that time, we were going through the end of the Coronavirus Disease of 2019 (COVID-19). North Carolina would not do it; the Governor would not allow it. We have the infrastructure. We worked with Mandalay Bay. They immediately got us the rooms. They worked with the discounts. They have conventions departments. They can take on large organizations. When I go back and look at those organizations that have at least 5,000 members or more, it is endless.

When I initially started looking at this, I sent out a survey. From retired organizations, veteran organizations, officer's organizations, enlisted organizations, veteran support organizations, they love Nevada because it is an easy use. The things they pay the most attention to, of course, are hotel fees, accessibility to airlines, do you have the infrastructure to handle—like you can literally bring tanks into our facilities. You can bring helicopters into our facilities. You can bring trucks into our facilities. Literally the only one we will be competing with that gets more military conferences right now is Orlando. We are leaving money on the table. I literally get calls at least once or twice a month asking would we be interested. Of course, I say no because I do not have the support. I refer them to the convention authorities. If we had a military person that could be the technical expert and work with them, make it more seamless in terms of going back to things like flags, protocol, and having color guard or honor guard, all those things we do as a military, but somebody has to have that checklist to work through. It would be easy. If you had one military conference that came in here, that would pay for the position; just 1 of 1,500 people. That is a no-brainer in terms of making it happen.

Going back to your second question. Currently, you have approximately 3,500 people in the Nevada Army National Guard. You have about 1,300 in the Nevada Air National Guard. We are projected to get over the next year approximately 800 individuals to include the Army and the Air. All we are doing now is going through the negotiations and paperwork. I am working with the NGB and our Land Component Commander. The one place we have been asked to do more—two days ago—I was talking to the Director of the Air National Guard, General Loh—they are giving us additional force structure to work on Nellis, which will be guardsmen. They want us to take on more missions. It always starts off by making sure you have the infrastructure because every time you start hiring more, you have to think about all the support personnel and where you are going to put them. We are a growth State.

Going back to your question about recruiting, we have no struggles with recruiting. Zero. We have none. We do well with recruiting in Nevada. Whatever you are seeing out there is not happening here. We have the ability to, if we get these missions, fulfill them. Of course, you are probably going to get individuals that would come over from the states you acquire the force structure from, but we can recruit. I told the Director of the Air National Guard a couple of days ago, "I can recruit a wing (which is over 1,000 people) down in Southern Nevada if you gave me the force structure." Feel free to reach out to them. They know we are a growth State.

Going back to your question, when they look at where they will place force structure, they look at the health of an organization, which is why I talked about the things in here. They look at recruiting, retention, readiness, complaints, if you have facilities. We are healthy as an organization. The goal is that we get additional money from the feds to build these facilities because we cannot come and ask you to build us a whole new armory. We have to be moved up the Military Construction (MILCON) list, so they would provide the funding for us. I have to say another thank you; we are trying to acquire a C-130J, the newest C-130s, in our wing up north. Last Friday, the Interim Finance Committee gave us \$850,000 for the design to expand the ramp. I can go to NGB and say the State is playing its part in supporting our growth. We are competing against three other states to get that modernization. It will be huge for us as a State if we were able to do that. I say thank you that the State has stepped up to support us, so we are able to get that to show the value the State places in its military.

Assemblyman D'Silva:

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the State, General. You are an inspiration. I have a further question, but I will get with you offline about that.

Chair Torres:

Members, any additional questions? I wanted to specifically ask about the workers' comp issue you mentioned. You listed a whole bunch of things we want to see fixed. If you could, talk more to that worker's comp issue. As I understand it, if they are working on State money, so maybe they are working on New Year's Eve on the Las Vegas Strip, they are going to get one rate. But if they are working, deployed, or other type of service under Title 10; there are different rates. Can you talk more about that?

Major General Berry:

Here is an example. If you have a death on active duty, all the federal benefits—first of all, you get the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)—which is about \$500,000—lifetime medical, lifetime benefits, your kids get the benefits. On the State side, on workers'

compensation—a matter of fact, the widow of the soldier that passed was getting so much of the run-around saying you do not qualify for worker's compensation. That is not a part of the death benefit. We will review it. We had our people sit down with her this weekend to fill out paperwork because you do not meet the same qualifications. You are completely taken care of on Active Duty. On State Active Duty, because you do not have the same safeguards. We think a big part of it is that nobody has looked at it, sat down and done a side-by-side comparison. We are going to ask for that to happen this time and show you the numbers. Someone asked me this question; how often do you have a death on State Active Duty? I cannot remember if we have had one. I cannot say we have not, but I cannot remember. It does not happen. The more liability tends to be when you are in the Title 10 status, and you are downrange and when we have accidents and things like that.

I think it is something that is well overdue. We are also looking at what is going on around the nation with the other 53 states, territories, and districts in terms of what they do. What we have discovered is they work hard to match the federal. It is something that has not been looked at. That is why you do not have the same degree of benefits. One of the things we see in a lot of states is your dependents, they get college taken care of, health care until they turn 18 or graduate from college. They make sure they get the compensation check. Whatever that person was making while on State Active Duty, they still receive a percentage of that, which tends to happen in some workman comp injuries. Those types of things are not in place right now. We are looking at how we can make it equal the federal.

Chair Torres:

There is something specifically in statute that would have to be added for that clarity so those rights could then be expanded for that compensation. Are benefits like college and health care already included?

Major General Berry:

I do not think they are included right now, no.

Chair Torres:

That is interesting. I appreciate it. I hope, as we are looking at legislation, that we would put it into place to allow for—specifically, I think about young kids or people that maybe have passed under this old law, we would have to put some type of exemption so they could receive these benefits until they are 18, and obviously the free college too. I look forward to continuing that conversation and working with you all on that.

I do not see any additional questions here. We are ready to move on. Thank you for being with us today. I appreciate it.

Major General Berry:

Thank you all for your support. I brag about this all the time; this is a pro-military State. You do so much for us, and on behalf of our 4,800 people, we say thank you.

AGENDA ITEM VI—PRESENTATION ON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES IN NEVADA

[This agenda Item was taken out of order.]

Chair Torres:

At this time, we will move on to a presentation on emergency management activities in Nevada. Deputy Administrator Luce, when you are ready, please begin.

Sharon Luce, Deputy Administrator, Division of Emergency Management and Office of Homeland Security, Office of the Military:

Thank you, Madam Chair and the rest of the Committee on Government Affairs, for the opportunity to speak on our mission and activities when it relates to emergency management in the State of Nevada. ([Agenda Item VI](#))

Our mission is coordinating the prevention, protection, mitigation, response, and recovery programs and resources through partnerships to build resilient communities for Nevada's residents and visitors. What that means is you have your local public safety and first responders that are responding every day to emergencies, but there are going to be emergencies that exceed their capability to respond at their level. At that point, we are the structure and the entity they would contact in order to get more assistance, whether it is during a response, but also in the preparedness efforts prior to a response. That is a huge part of what we are doing. We work with those partners to achieve our vision of building resilience through coordination and partnerships, using our values of stewardship, integrity, innovation, collaboration, and teamwork.

Our Division goals are to actively cultivate a diverse and professional emergency management workforce who embodies integrity, collaboration, and innovation; to strengthen Nevada by supporting the development and improvement of capabilities, capacities, and communications; and to lead and coordinate the equitable delivery of emergency management, resources, and services to the whole community.

Our organization currently has about 40 full-time State employees, 10 contract employees, and 1 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), what we call a Federal Integration Team Leader, that is embedded and co-located with us in our Nevada Operations Center in Carson City. That Nevada Operations Center is our headquarters, but we also have a southern Nevada office here in Las Vegas.

We are a component of the Office of the Military. You spoke to General Berry. He is the Adjutant General. Our Division Administrator and Homeland Security Chief by NRS statute is David Fogerson. On my side, as the Deputy Administrator and Deputy Homeland Security Chief, I have what is called our Access and Functional Needs Program, our Preparedness and Operations Section, and our Mission Support Section. Most of what we do from an operational perspective is to provide information sharing on best practices with our local jurisdictions as well as private entities, non-government organizations, and volunteers in our efforts to improve community preparedness. In our preparedness efforts, we have our Training and Exercise Program, our Emergency Planning Program, a Hazard Mitigation Program, a Resources Program that includes tribal liaison officers, and a Rural and Frontier Program so we can perform outreach and technical assistance with our rural partners. Mission Support includes our Public Information and Affairs as well as our new 911 Coordinator, and our Communications and IT Program. All these things work together

to support our local entities. If they do get a response that overwhelms them, we have structures and capability to support through our Nevada Operations Center. We also have a Finance Section that is headed by our Administrative Services Officer III, who acts as our Chief Finance Officer. We have our Grants Manager, and we have two types of grant programs. We have recurring grant programs that are used in the preparedness side of things where we are the primary recipient and the local entities are subrecipients. Also under grants are our Recovery Grant Programs and our Mitigation Grant Programs. If there was a presidentially-declared disaster, those Recovery Grant and Mitigation Grant Programs become available, and we administer those programs. Then of course, we also have our fiscal and administrative services that help keep our organization running.

We have a few public bodies. Government led is the Commission on Homeland Security and the Committee on Finance. When we have much of these grant programs, especially our Homeland Security Grant Program—which includes our State Homeland Security Grant Program from the federal government and the Urban Area Security Initiative—those projects are brought forward to these commissions and are approved. A lot of those projects fund things like our LVMPD and their capabilities for counterterrorism for hardening areas with more presence. We have our Las Vegas Fire Rescue, who also has capability with their federally recognized Bomb Intervention Team, and many other projects that help us secure and protect our homeland that funnel through this Committee for approval. We also have a Governor-developed task force, the Cybersecurity Task Force, which is relatively new. That is so we can take advantage of a State and local Cybersecurity Grant Program that includes a path through local governments to help them bolster their cyber defense capabilities as well as helping us with our State agencies with similar projects that would help us with our cyber defense at a State level.

By NRS, we have the Nevada Resiliency Advisory Committee, our Nevada Tribal Emergency Coordinating Counsel, our State Disaster Identification Coordination Committee, our Nevada Intrastate Mutual Aid Committee, and the State Search and Rescue Board. Much of this is to help coordinate amongst our local jurisdictions and find ways we can leverage the grant funding in a way that helps build capability capacity for emergency and disaster response. We also have two other groups, the Emergency Preparedness Working Group and the Hazard Mitigation Working Group, that are at the power of the Administrator or the Chief of our Division, where we engage in a lot of information sharing and technical assistance to help programs build their capacities.

Our threats, hazards, and our annual focus, currently as it stands right now: cybersecurity; election integrity; earthquake; wildland fire; flood; winter storms; pandemics; domestic violent extremism; and criminal active shooter events. Those have come up quite a bit. We do an annual threat/hazard identification, risk assessment, and something called a stakeholder preparedness review where we contextualize these threats and hazards to our State as well as our local jurisdictions. Then we identify the capability to respond, recover, mitigate, protect, prevent those threats and hazards from hurting us here. These are the threats and hazards that have come up most recently as our priority areas to coordinate and work with our local entities to try and bring down those risks and vulnerabilities to our community.

Our annual focus coming out of that process for 2024 is critical transportation, which includes infrastructure and evacuation as well as access control and identification verification. This is where we have responders that need to enter an area, potentially a mass casualty event or any other law enforcement response, where they might be in plain clothes, and they need to get to the scene. We have this access control and identification focus we are trying to improve throughout the State, as well as our overall operational

coordination for response and recovery from the local level, the state level, and the federal government when FEMA also becomes involved in any of our response and recovery efforts. In the past, we have continued to also bolster operational coordination, operational communications, supply chain integrity, cyber effects, fatality management, health and social services, and disaster housing. Those are the things that year over year as we go through these threat assessments, we identify opportunities for us to work with our local partners to build capability.

All incidents are locally executed, state guided, and federally supported. It is an entire enterprise between the local level, the state level, and the federal level. Our local first responders and every county are responsible for trying to use the resources they have available through mutual aid or by making their own direct purchases and hiring whatever resource, staff personnel, or equipment they are looking for, but when something becomes overwhelming for them, they will contact us, and we act as a coordinating structure within the State to get them additional resources from other neighboring counties through our Intrastate Mutual Aid Assistance Program. If it gets to a Presidential Federal Declaration, then we will be working with FEMA and helping the locals understand all those various requirements that are a part of funding from a federal government perspective. For an entity like Clark County where it is an urban area, there is a lot of subject matter expertise when it comes to disaster and emergency management. When you get into your rural communities, some of those emergency managers do not quite have the background in this. We, as the State, provide them with technical assistance and advice to help them get through that process if we should identify resources they might need, or if it does get to a Presidential Declaration status, to help them navigate that bureaucratic system with the federal government. That is why we are a guide to the local entities.

State guided missions and activities we have been responsible for last year—in 2023, we had our atmospheric river in Northern Nevada which resulted in a winter storm and power outages. We had a second atmospheric river in March. That was a Presidential Disaster Declaration. We did have to assist Eureka County, Lyon County, primarily, and other Northern Nevada counties with their coordination with the federal government for flood management—things like sandbags, high-clearance vehicles, roads that got washed away that needed to be rebuilt. We had a State Route 208 rockslide. We had spring thaw activities after all the historic snow that packed on the Sierra Mountains. It has to go somewhere at some point. As it warms up in the summer, it started to impact our communities as well. We had a Hurricane Hilary response, which was a new thing for us. We do not typically, in the State of Nevada, being landlocked, anticipate, and it does not come up in our threat assessment that we would have to prepare for a hurricane. That is something new we took on last year. That impacted Clark County, primarily the community in Mount Charleston was impacted by this. Then of course, Formula 1, Las Vegas Grand Prix, the Super Bowl event this year, and New Year's Eve are all other missions we support. General Berry gave an overview of the State Active Duty assignments, things like the Civil Support Team, and other activities that are being done to support our local law enforcement. We are a coordinating structure that gets to the National Guard and deploying and supporting those events. We get a request from the county emergency manager asking for a specific capability for these events; then we source that. Most of the time, sourcing it when it comes to New Year's Eve and the Civil Support Team has gone to the National Guard. That was 2023. You can see it was a busy year last year. There are other things we coordinated that did not reach the level of our operation center activation.

In prior years, of course, we had COVID-19, which was a significant coordination effort we had. We had wildfires in Pine View, Tamarack, and Caldor, as well as civil unrest for elections, vaccine, and a fuel supply concern coming out of Long Beach where we had to

prepare for the possibility of needing to put some type of fuel supply program and security around gas stations and things like that, as well as making sure our first responders had fuel as well. Earthquake is always a top concern. There was an earthquake prior that affected Nye County and caused some damages.

Outside of a mission, I mentioned the threat/hazard identification and risk assessment process, which sets the tone for everything we do. It helps us identify where we need to focus our efforts. It also helps us identify the training that is needed. We have a State Training Officer that is able to administer training programs from FEMA that our local first responders need; things like the Incident Command System and National Incident Management System that our fire, police, and public health preparedness partners utilize on a day-to-day basis to coordinate these large, massive responses to emergencies, especially when those emergencies cross over jurisdictional lines and include agencies you do not typically work with from a day-to-day basis. It gives them the ability to access those training classes through our State Training Officer. We also provide Homeland Security Emergency Management Hazard Mitigation and Post Disaster Recovery Grant funding. It is to identify many ways where we can hopefully prevent, protect, or mitigate against a disaster to begin with. When it comes to a response or recovery, we are more capable of overcoming any of those challenges that may come.

Here are examples of what we do. In that case of the county emergency manager needing to request assistance because they need some type of resource, we have our 24-hour Duty Officer Program. That is who they would contact. It is the first line of notification for an incident as well that may potentially be of interest to the Governor or may potentially require us to coordinate resources. Many of the calls we get that may not be well known is coordinating for search and rescue assistance. We have our State Search and Rescue Coordinator, and we identify who might have a helicopter that has a hoist, whether it is a State agency like Nevada Division of Forestry that has that capability, the National Guard, or it could be a local entity like LVMPD that might be able to provide that. We are involved quite a bit in calls when it comes to search and rescue. We also have to make notifications for hazardous materials, any type of spills, releases, or potential releases if we are not sure. Any interstate or intrastate mutual aid, except for wildfire, we would get involved in. If there is a flood event, and they need sandbags, or sand, or high-clearance vehicles to be able to cross roads, then we would use those mutual aid programs to try and source that for the local entity.

The Nevada Operations Center becomes active when the lone duty officer exceeds their capability as one person to coordinate all these resources. We do a lot of calls. If it is a complex emergency, they might be asking for a lot of different things that are coming from a lot of different directions. They coordinate with those local entities to identify what they need and the logistics to getting it from point A to point B. It is great we found something, maybe another county has it, but we have to figure out how to get from that other county to somewhere elsewhere in the State. That could become challenging too when you have remote, rural communities when it comes to trying to identify the logistics of getting something to and from. Of course, if the federal government is activated, the Nevada Operations Center is where we would be co-located and working with our federal government partners in FEMA to coordinate resources from the federal level down to the local level.

By NRS, we are required to stand up an Incident Management Assistance Team. We have one that has been active here in Southern Nevada. We are working on the credentialing and training to stand up an entire team in Northern Nevada. What they do is, for those rural communities that do not have the expertise to handle these emergencies on their own, we

can provide assistance to them by sending a team. These team members can be Division full-time employees, but it could also be partners from local entities that go through the process of being qualified and credentialed with our national qualification system to be able to respond. We also manage interoperable communications. We have something called the Nevada Core Systems Network (NCORE) system, which is a fallback. If any of the local communication systems go out, they have access to the statewide radio system where they can still communicate with one another. We also manage radiological readiness, including the waste isolation pilot plant. We purchase equipment for calibration of hazardous waste as well as provide specialized training to local responders on how to use the equipment and respond to radiological waste issues.

We also have Tribal Emergency Management Liaisons. They would work with the Nevada Indian Commission or the Interstate Tribal Commission of Nevada to identify tribal needs when it comes to emergency preparedness, whether it is help with the plan, getting them the incident command system training, or helping them do an exercise of some sort. The Federal Emergency Management Agency has a Tribal Liaison that is assigned to our State. We have that position funded through the federal government, but we do not have the position inhouse yet, as we had somebody that left. We are currently recruiting for that FEMA position. It helps because the tribes can either go directly to the local county for assistance, they can go to the State, or they can go to the federal government. Being able to communicate, coordinate, and identify who is going to try to meet the needs of our tribal partners is important to us. We also have a Drought Response Committee and planning, training, and exercising for health care and our emergency managers.

I have talked about the grant programs quite a bit, but we try to have a coordinated effort. That way, we are looking at things from a regional level for Southern Nevada, Western Nevada, Eastern Nevada, and what could be shareable amongst different counties and different responder agencies. That way, the grant funding helps close any type of gaps or challenges we are having with assisting in any type of emergency.

One of our newer programs is an Access and Functional Needs Program. Basically, to dispel what this is, every Nevadan has needs for communication, maintaining their health, independence, support and safety, and transportation. The Access and Functional Needs Coordinator we have identifies ways in which we could meet the needs of all Nevadans through plan development, training and exercises, and advice on different equipment that might help different people. One of the things we highlight as an example of how we would use access and functional needs is, let us say you have a shelter, and you add a wheelchair ramp to that shelter to make it accessible. That wheelchair ramp not only benefits wheelchair users, but it benefits a family with a stroller that needs to access that shelter. It benefits me as a normal person if I come in with rolling luggage or anything that is on wheels, now are accessible to that shelter. This person tries to find those kinds of crosscutting opportunities that benefit more people by having some type of accessibility put in place. They work with the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities to do some outreach and have met with the county emergency managers to raise awareness on opportunities they could use that might cost minimal money to them—things like paper signs they can implement readily and quickly that would make their services, when it comes to an emergency, more accessible.

Lastly, I was asked to present best practices on Statewide 911. Before I can present best practices, I want to highlight the current state and the current challenges. We got our first Statewide 911 Coordinator earlier this year, but we have a number of public safety answering points like the LVMPD, the Combined Communications Center that services Las Vegas Fire Rescue, Clark County Fire Department, North Las Vegas Fire Department. We

have Henderson, which has a communications center that covers both the police, fire, and EMS (Emergency Medical Services). In Northern Nevada, we have Douglas County and Reno, and the rural counties typically have a small group of people that are public safety answering point specialists. Prior to getting someone in place to try and identify best practices, what happens is those entities have challenges because they adopt their own computer-aided dispatch systems, or they get their own phone systems and call management systems. Some of them might not be able to get call management systems because in rural communities, they might not have access to broadband. They have archaic manual processes of still keeping track of all the calls that are coming into their counties.

Another challenge is there is a lot of staffing shortages, not just in our urban areas. It is difficult to get someone trained in rural communities as well. There is a variability in agency procedures for how they take calls or dispatch calls. There are professional programs and standards that are out there, but not every agency in the State adopts these standards and puts them into their procedures. Another big challenge is whether these programs have a 311 non-emergency line. If they do not, then every call is going to go into 911. If you have one single dispatcher in one rural community, that is going to be a lot on that person to have to triage those calls. Those entities that do have 311 and 911, another challenge they encounter is they cannot transfer the call from a 311 line to a 911 line or a 911 line to a 311 line. With how some of these stations are set up, that workstation might only be set up to do a 911 call and not a 311 call and vice versa. It creates challenges internally within those organizations with trying to manage these calls and keep up with the call volume in a way that efficiently gets whatever resources are needed to the community at large.

These inefficiencies have highly affected response times and citizen safety. Our Statewide 911 Coordinator is hitting the ground running, first by building relationships with all the counties as well as all the public safety answering points that exist in those counties and trying to establish an understanding of the system—so, taking an inventory of the different systems they are using for their communications and an inventory of the policies, procedures, and protocols they are using when it comes to call taking or dispatching calls. From there, trying to build best practices they could use across the State and advocating for Next Generation 911 (NG911) where the technology is there for broadband, where they can have pictures and text 911 that can use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to augment calls. Especially in those rural communities where you have one person, the AI can help triage and figure out if it is a non-emergency versus an emergency. It will help with the call management and the priority assignment.

Those are some of the things we are doing. From there, understanding—like we do with a threat hazard assessment—the shortfalls and gaps and then helping them either through planning, or training, or exercise efforts, but also through advice on funding, coordination of funding, opportunities for them to seek grant programs. There are 911 federal grant programs available, but we do have to get to a point where the Statewide 911 Coordinator is qualified and certified first and registered, and then try to pursue those grant programs. We are a ways out from being able to meet that as well as understanding whatever else is in those federal notice of funding opportunities because we have never had this position before. We have never been able to see what could be taken advantage of through those federal grants.

That is, overall, my presentation. I do want to welcome, at any point in time, if anybody would like to visit us either at our Nevada Operations Center or down here in our Southern Nevada Operations, I welcome that. We can have more conversations and talk a bit more in detail about the challenges we experience as well as opportunities. That will conclude my presentation. I am open to questions at this time.

Chair Torres:

I will go first to Northern Nevada. Are there any questions, Assemblyman Gurr or Senator Daly? It appears not. Any Members here in Las Vegas? Assemblyman D'Silva.

Assemblyman D'Silva:

I had a question about those urban security grants the federal government has been doling out to the states. I was wondering if you were able to utilize any of those through your office, and if there are any ongoing efforts to retrieve more of those grants?

Ms. Luce:

The Urban Area Security Initiative is specific to the urban area of Clark County. That entity is able to access those grants. It is represented by the urban area working group, which has your North Las Vegas Fire, Las Vegas Fire, City Marshals, your County Emergency Management and Fire Department, LVMPD, Las Vegas Office of Emergency Management—all of those various entities—the City of Mesquite, Henderson as well. Those cities that are within Clark County can take advantage of that particular grant program. That falls under the umbrella of the Homeland Security Grant Program. There is the urban area pot of money, and then there is the State Homeland Security Grant Program, which can be used outside of Clark County for similar initiatives.

Chair Torres:

Members, any additional questions? I did have one question regarding the Statewide 911. It is a conversation we have had in this Committee before, and I have had with several of the law enforcement agencies. They did not bring this up at all, but I had asked about what we are doing with 911, because we know we have had several issues throughout the State with 911 systems being inundated with calls when there is an emergency. Those lines not being able to respond, individuals not being able to respond quickly enough because there are so many calls. There are other emergencies going on at the same time, so things fall through the cracks, or you have a long wait time which causes another issue and can sometimes have the cost of life. Can you talk a bit about where we are at? It seems like we are initiating the conversation about that. What does it look like, or what is the timeline to implementing it? How can the Legislature be supportive of those efforts? It seems like supporting the funding for the NG911 tech is part of that.

Ms. Luce:

Yes, we are at the beginning stages. It first starts with building those relationships, and that takes time, especially because we have not had a Coordinator that has been able to go out and find out what systems are being used, whether it is the call taking system or the dispatching system, or even the computer systems—like the hardware and peripherals themselves that all the different public safety answering points are utilizing. It is going to take time. This first year, it is all about building the relationships and then starting to have those conversations about the different capabilities and doing analysis on what is a good practice or a good system that an agency is using that others might want to look at, or what are good procedures that an agency is using that other agencies might want to adopt. It is going to take time because we only have the one person that is trying to reach the whole entire State. They do have support from our Statewide Interoperability Coordinator, who is also our Mission Support Manager, and the Deputy Statewide Interoperability Coordinator. Those three individuals working together to try to cover and find out what can be done. It is going to take time. One of the other challenges is we are not able to take advantage of

federal funding for 911 programs. There may be potential projects that there is a lot of buy-in from these public safety answering points and their agencies to want to pursue.

In Clark County, as an example, the LVMPD is your primary answering point. When you call that number for 911, they ask, "Police, fire, or medical?" If you say fire or medical, they transfer that call to the Combined Communications Center, which is located in Las Vegas Fire Rescue. It is a completely different facility, completely different team, that is working on that call. They have different processes and procedures. Even within a local entity like this, it is challenging to coordinate. They have done quite a bit in Clark County to do so, but there are differences. They are not able to see what the other is doing, or they might not need to see what the other is doing, but they have challenges with inefficiencies with communicating back and forth between one another because it could be a call that gets forwarded to fire EMS, but then you find out when people arrive on scene there is law enforcement entity on there, and then you have to get back on the call with LVMPD, and coordinate your responses. On the local level, there is a huge appetite for wanting to be more interoperable amongst the different public safety answering points to where if one entity was impacted, another might be able to take on those calls and alleviate call volume, but there are no systems in place, and it is costly to take on those projects, because you are talking about communications infrastructure, broadband access, and things that might not be available outside of urban areas as well.

Chair Torres:

Is there any match grant available from the federal government if we were to invest in some of this new infrastructure?

Ms. Luce:

I would have to come back to that. I do not know off the top of my head. Committing to the broadband expansion outside of 911, and getting especially, the rural entities access to broadband is a big first step. Any of those grants through, whether it is the infrastructure bill that established those things, that might be something helpful. Getting broadband access is a good step towards getting to NG911. In the short term, it could be the best practices with procedures that do not require these big infrastructure things, and that is what that Coordinator would be doing.

Chair Torres:

I appreciate that. Members, any additional questions? It does not appear there are any additional questions. Thank you for your presentation and for joining us.

AGENDA ITEM VII—OVERVIEW OF RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE NEVADA INDIAN COMMISSION

[This agenda item was taken out of order.]

Chair Torres:

We are going to jump ahead to the overview of recent activities of the Nevada Indian Commission (NIC). Executive Director, Stacey Montooth, welcome back. When you are ready, you may begin.

Stacey Montooth, Executive Director, NIC:

How mu (how are you?). I am a citizen of the Walker River Paiute Nation, and I am the Executive Director of the NIC. Please allow me to express my gratitude to Chair Torres, the entire Committee on Government Affairs, and the LCB staff for inviting me and allowing me to provide updates on our Agency. ([Agenda Item VII](#))

As you will all likely remember, the charge of the NIC—soon to be the Department of Native American Affairs—is to improve the quality of life for our tribal nations and urban Indians. We are the liaison to the Governor's Office. Basically, when needed, we are the intermediary to all State services.

Some quick facts here—the NIC has been around for about 60 years. We do not speak for, but we often speak with, our 28 tribal nations, our urban Indian communities—those are the folks who choose to make Nevada their second home. My job is appointed. We currently have a dynamic staff of five.

Our Native American creation stories teach us that our people have been in the Great Basin since time began. Our relatives include the Numa, the Newe, the Nuwu, the Wa She Shu, and the Pipa Aha Macav people. That is the Northern Paiute, the Western Shoshone, the Southern Paiute, the Washoe, and the Fort Mojave people.

Here is a look at our modern-day land basis. Please know, in the Indigenous culture it is often frowned upon to brag. In our communities, standing out or being boastful is considered being disrespectful. I am going to ask for forgiveness from any of our elders who hear my words today and consider that I am bragging. Again, it is something we often are shunned for. However, since the conclusion of the historic 82nd Legislative Session, our tribal citizens have enjoyed several positive outcomes. Thanks to this Body's work and the support of Governor Lombardo, every Native American—per the last census, 80,000 people—are now celebrating new school construction, new job training, increased law enforcement measures for missing and murdered Indigenous peoples, more secure child welfare measures, significantly greater higher education opportunities, as well as the NIC becoming a standalone agency. Since June 2023, we have surpassed the 14,000-person visitor mark at our Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum. In the last quarter, we hosted 12 groups, including 251 students. They all learned the history of Indigenous boarding schools and how this federal policy still impacts Native Americans today. Thanks to your guidance, the NIC has allocated over \$16 million of the \$20 million in Governor recovery funds that this Body and Governor Lombardo entrusted to us to sub-grant to our tribal nations.

We have signed agreements with 26 out of 28 of our tribal nations. We have launched a Civic Engagement Task Force to address election services and legislative systems to support a statewide nonpartisan ecosystem which focuses on Native American matters. We have enjoyed hosting United States Olympic gold medalist Billy Mills, who visited the Stewart Campus to bring awareness to our loved ones who did not survive Indian boarding schools. We provided feedback to U.S. [Department of] Health and Human Services Secretary Becerra about the behavioral and mental health crisis on our reservations. We have made progress with the enforcement of the Native American Graves Protection Act, that is NAGPA. We are working on branding, and our IT solutions as we become our own agency. Moreover, we listen.

I want to humbly share with you what we have not done as well. We have not completed our strategic plan for the Native learners, as we are currently struggling with a

69.13 percent high school graduation rate. The rest of Nevada students are at 81.3 percent. We have not completed our regulations regarding the treatment of sacred remains—those that are disturbed by industry or by accident. We have not expanded our staff despite funds to do so. However, as I often say, there has never been a better time to be Indigenous and live in the great State of Nevada. I promise we will continue to work hard every day to meet our mission and to meet our purpose. What questions may I answer?

Chair Torres:

Members, we will open it up to any questions. We will go first to Assemblyman Gurr in Northern Nevada? It looks like we are good there. Members in Las Vegas? Assemblyman Carter.

Assemblyman Carter:

Thank you for the presentation. You mentioned in one of the milestones, the expansion of waiver of fees. What types of fees? I have talked to several members of the community and brought up the hunting and fishing licenses, and also the convoluted process about getting the waiver to go to State parks. Has there been any work done in those areas?

Ms. Montooth:

I apologize in advance; I did not make myself clear. When I was talking in my presentation about a waiver of fees, I was specifically referring to NSHE. I was talking about the Native American fee waiver for our higher education institutions. I do not think it is top secret. The Nevada System of Higher Education reports annually, but we believe the number of Native learners who are taking advantage of that program is going to double since it was expanded through the last session. I would be happy to look into the current process for waiving of fees. That being an entrance fee or licensing fee, an entrance fee to State parks, a licensing fee—hunting, fishing—is that what I heard? My ancestors would be embarrassed, but I am not a hunter. I am a Agai Dicutta, that is a Trout Eater. I am from Walker River. I do not fish either, but my relatives tell me you take your tribal ID (identification) when you go down to the fish and game offices to apply. I do not believe there is an online process yet. Regarding parks, when I pull up to meet the park rangers, I show them my tribal ID, and I have not had any issues, but I can get back to you about a formal process.

Chair Torres:

Senator Flores.

Senator Flores:

Thank you for your presentation. In opportunities that I have had a chance to work with our diverse communities, particularly Native communities, one of the conversations we were talking about was pertaining to—this happens in general with underrepresented communities across the board—a disconnect between the institution—I am talking about NSHE—and families. Sometimes it is because it is intimidating. You might be the first one in your family who is about to take that leap. Sometimes it is because even though there might be your cousin or somebody else in your family that has done it, you do not have somebody in your immediate family who can provide that kind of nexus, “Here is what you do. Staying in the dorms is fun,” and it can be intimidating. I know when we talk about NSHE—and this is a conversation that has been going on for at least three sessions—on how to bring the institution to the actual Native community, right now, the traditional approach

to systems of higher education is there is an institution, and the human goes to them. Statistically, we know underrepresented communities—because there is that disconnect, there is that fear because you might be the first one. There are so many other scenarios. Maybe after semester one, they are not ready to fulfill that. I am curious to know where the conversations are today. I know our tribes have taken the initiative and provide the 101s within their specific tribes where there is a space there. I believe Truckee Meadows has a program.

I am curious to know, are we taking that conversation and expanding it further? Now that we are waiving tuition, and we have the expectation of doubling the number of students, the question is, how do we ensure we graduate them? There is no success in getting a student to enroll if we are only doing it for a semester or two, which statistically, we know often happens, particularly in underrepresented communities, but specifically with our tribes. It is for all the reasons we discussed. I am curious to know where those conversations are at now. How open have the institutions been to that? If you could give us some knowledge there, please?

Ms. Montooth:

Like all things in Indian country, there is not one size fits all. There is not one solution to our complex problems. I am going to try to give you three specific areas that I think address your question. If I am not successful, I hope you will let me know. One of the great options with the fee waiver is that it is not specific to traditional students. By traditional, I mean 18- to 22-year-olds. The fee waiver can be utilized for one class; it can be used for law school or any course of study, which is awesome. We know from the Indian Education and Advisory Committee that typically, Native learners at the college level have a higher average age. Along with being a little older when you start college, sometimes also that brings other dynamics, including children, sometimes a couple of jobs, so having access to online learning could be significant. We have a couple of pilot programs; however, we also have at least 12 situations where our tribal reservations, our communities, do not have access to stable broadband. That is something the Governor's Office of Science, Innovation and Technology has been addressing. Inter-tribal Council has a consortium working together to try to increase all the aspects of not just online learning, but having what I consider a utility nowadays. Having the Internet is like having water in your house to a certain extent. That is one way we can approach, at least, the outreach.

When we are talking about your idea about bringing learning to our communities, we have a solution that maybe is a compromise. This summer, there will be no less than three camps—rigorous, extensive camps for Native students between Southern Nevada and Northern Nevada. Both are being hosted and driven by our flagship universities, University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV) and Nevada. These are specifically designed for Native learners. It brings in professionals from all aspects, from support services to social activities to the basics in academic learning for a freshman. There are a lot of services. We anticipate having about 300 learners at the combined camps, one on campus and one at the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR) at Lake Tahoe.

Finally, if you will pardon my editorializing, the ideal model for not just outreach, but recruiting, retention, and providing those successful strategies to ensure our students secure degrees has to do with having the resources on campus. The University of Nevada, Reno starting an Office of Indigenous Relations is absolutely on the right path. That is specific services that are available, not just to the 300-plus students at that university, but for potential students, for the families. I know UNLV has done research and is looking

closely at that model. Based on what we know works and has worked at other higher education institutes in this country, that seems to be the magic sauce.

Senator Flores:

Thank you for that. That sounds amazing. It sounds like we are moving in the right direction, and the bill is doing what it was supposed to do. We are always concerned that we move in that direction of not just enrolling students but graduating them. They are two different structures. They are two different agendas. They fulfill two different purposes. Switching gears—back in 2017, I recall having a conversation in our Government Affairs Committee about things we can do as a State to show that relationship with our Native community and that proud, rich history we have. One of the things I remember was mentioned back then was having the flags of different tribes represented within the Nevada State Legislative building, but also in our institutions of higher learning, UNR, UNLV, and our community colleges. Have we had that conversation move anywhere? I believe UNR has them. I was curious to know what is happening with the other folks in the other institutions.

Ms. Montooth:

You and I did have that conversation. I believe it was before I had even started my State service, and I had the pleasure of still working for the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony. Last Thursday, I got bids from the Flag Store in Reno for that project. We are finally at a point where the NIC, which as you know is housed at the historic Stewart Indian School, is going to be able to purchase flags for a couple of different purposes—indoor meetings and not just to decorate but to show the civic pride of all our tribal nations on that beautiful quad area. Not surprisingly, the more you order, the less expensive it is. I have already connected with our partners to see who is in. Thank you for that, and I will follow-up with you and let you know who says they are in.

Chair Torres:

Members, any additional questions? I have a question. You had mentioned the high school graduation rate was significantly lower for Indigenous students. I wanted to know what we are doing as a State to address that issue. What work could be done as a State to address that issue?

Ms. Montooth:

This is a tough one. Almost my entire life I have been a believer that education is the great equalizer. That is our magic bullet. However, even before the pandemic, graduation rates—the success of Native learners in public education has always been behind every other subpopulation that the Nevada Department of Education (NDE) tracks. Three weeks ago, the NIC partnered with several different organizations, other State divisions and departments, including NDE and UNLV. We had our annual Native American Indian Education Summit, and we shared all that data. We were excited to have experts who have been contracted by the State to dig into the data. What we learned a few weeks ago is it is connected to attendance. In addition to these failing graduation rates, our Native learners have the highest dropout rates and have chronic absenteeism.

As I mentioned earlier, no one size fits all. There is a plethora of reasons for students not to attend school. I can tell you that along with NDE, which is required to do a strategic plan every five years, the NIC has the authority to create subcommittees. We have an Indian Education Committee which will be reporting to the NIC leadership next week about their recently concluded surveys that have been done. The idea was to hit four different

stakeholders: college students; Native classroom teachers; community stakeholders; as well as folks who work for our tribal education departments—they work for tribal governments. We are seeking their input on not just the biggest hurdles but possible solutions. We are going to put all that information together to come up with our strategic plan that we want to meld with what the State's strategic plan is.

Chair Torres:

Do you know when that plan is going to be developed or rolled out?

Ms. Montooth:

We closed the collection of surveys at the end of April. It is my understanding that it is possible—I am not certain—the organizers will be releasing some of that data on Monday at the NIC Board meeting. I can follow up with you and give you a timeline. Would that work?

Chair Torres:

That would be great. When you have the information for some of those results and also the findings from the summit you held, I would love to have a conversation about that or see what that might look like so we can work on something specific to address the graduation rate in that community.

Members, any additional questions? I do not believe there are any additional questions at this time. Thank you, Ms. Montooth, for coming to present once again.

AGENDA ITEM VIII—PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Torres:

We will go to the final item on our agenda for today, and open it up for the second round of public comment. At this time, I will invite anyone from the packed room in Carson City to join us. If you wish to testify in public comment, as a reminder, public comment will be limited to two minutes. It does not appear anyone from the packed room in Carson City is going to be joining us today. I will go to the packed room here in Las Vegas, Nevada. Is there anyone here in Las Vegas, Nevada wishing to testify in public comment? It does not appear there is anyone jumping to the testimony bench. Is anyone wishing to call in to testify in public comment?

BPS:

Chair, the public line is open and working, but there are no callers for public comment at this time.

Chair Torres:

Thank you to all the presenters for bearing with us and joining us for those presentations. We learned a lot, had a good conversation, and hopefully opened conversations for legislation in the future. I know as Assemblyman McArthur had a lot to say, but we took the words right out of his mouth—I think because he joined me yesterday in my classroom to speak to students and tell them cool war and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) stories. Thank you again, Assemblyman McArthur for joining us at my school. They appreciated that.

I do not believe there are any other questions. To let members of the public know, we will likely be rescheduling and consolidating the May and June date to have a full day of Government Affairs. You can join us for an all-day Government Affairs meeting sometime at the end of May or the beginning of June. We will get more information out as soon as we can.

AGENDA ITEM IX—ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting was adjourned at 3:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maria Velazquez
Research Policy Assistant

Jered McDonald
Chief Principal Policy Analyst

APPROVED BY:

Assemblywoman Selena Torres, Chair

Date: _____

MEETING MATERIALS

AGENDA ITEM	PRESENTER/ENTITY	DESCRIPTION
Agenda Item IV A	David Brown, Resident, Clark County	PowerPoint Presentation This is on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau (LCB), Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6825.
Agenda Item IV B	Susanne Kluh, General Manager, Greater Los Angeles County Vector Control District	PowerPoint Presentation This is on file in the Research Library of the LCB, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6825.
Agenda Item IV C-1	Krista Jenkins, Manager, Douglas County Mosquito Abatement District	Handout
Agenda Item IV C-2	Krista Jenkins, Manager, Douglas County Mosquito Abatement District	PowerPoint Presentation This is on file in the Research Library of the LCB, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6825.
Agenda Item V	Ondra Berry, Adjutant General, Nevada National Guard, Office of the Military	PowerPoint Presentation This is on file in the Research Library of the LCB, Carson City, Nevada. For copies, contact the Library at (775) 684-6825.
Agenda Item VI	Sharon Luce, Deputy Administrator, Division of Emergency Management and Office of Homeland Security, Office of the Military	PowerPoint Presentation
Agenda Item VII	Stacey Montooth, Executive Director, Nevada Indian Commission	PowerPoint Presentation

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