

NEWS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Business Committee Advocates for Ute Indian Tribe in Washington, D.C.

Ft. Duchesne, UT July 25, 2023

On July 12 and 13, 2023, the Business Committee held meetings with Congressional Offices, the Biden Administration, and the Smithsonian Museum for Natural History. The Business Committee is working in D.C. to protect Tribal members, lands, and waters. The Business Committee had meetings with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Social Security Administration (SSA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), and the U.S. Forest Service. Meetings were also held with Representative John Curtis (R-UT), Congressman Raul Ruiz (D-CA), and Congresswoman Harriet Hageman (R-WY), along with the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs. Finally, the Business Committee had the opportunity to meet with the research team at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

The Business Committee met with the SSA to advocate to secure Supplemental Security Income payments for Tribal members. The Business Committee emphasized the importance of these payments for Tribal members who rely on these payments to meet their basic needs. The Business Committee will continue to push the SSA to restore payments and hold the Federal government accountable to their trust responsibility.

Meetings were also held with the U.S. Forest Service to enforce the Tribe’s authority over the Forest Service lands within the Reservation. The lands within the Reservation are Indian Country and subject to the Tribe’s jurisdiction. The Business Committee also met with BLM on its proposed rule for “Public Lands.” The Business Committee asked BLM to use the rule to encourage restoration of tribal homelands taken by BLM and to increase tribal management of those lands.



Business Committee Chairman Julius Murray, Vice Chairman Christopher Tabbee, Councilmen Michael Natchees and Councilmen Cleveland Murray met with U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management.

The Business Committee had the opportunity to meet with the EPA to advocate for the inclusion of “free, prior, and informed consent” in the Agency’s consultation policies and discuss water quality standards (WQS) with the EPA. The Business Committee is working to ensure that WQS will not impact the Tribe’s environmentally responsible oil and gas development.

Up on Capitol Hill, the Business Committee met with Congressional Representatives Curtis and Hageman, and the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs to press Congress to urge Congress to establish Indian energy development as a priority as well as streamlining and reducing the National

Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) burdens. The Business Committee emphasized the need for Indian energy legislation and a hearing to consider Indian Country priorities on energy. Not only does the Tribe need jurisdiction over its resources and lands, but the Tribe also needs to be able to develop and protect such resources and lands. The Business Committee also met with Congressman Ruiz to seek the return of lands within the Uncompahgre Reservation. The Business Committee stressed the importance of restoring lands to the Tribe that were wrongfully taken.



Business Committee Chairman Julius Murray, Vice Chairman Christopher Tabbee, Councilmen Michael Natchees and Councilmen Cleveland Murray met with Rep. John Curtis (R-UT) and Rep. Raul Ruiz (D-CA).



Business Committee Chairman Julius Murray, Vice Chairman Christopher Tabbee, Councilmen Michael Natchees and Councilmen Cleveland Murray met with Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-WY) and Senate Committee on Indian Affairs staff.

Finally, the Business Committee also met with research team members at the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History. The Business Committee emphasized the importance of protecting and bringing home the remains of Tribal members that are being held by the Smithsonian.

About the Ute Indian Tribe - The Ute Indian Tribe resides on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in northeastern Utah. Three bands of Utes comprise the Ute Indian Tribe: the Whiteriver Band, the Uncompahgre Band and the Uintah Band. The Tribe has a membership of more than three thousand individuals, with over half living on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation. The Ute Indian Tribe operates its own tribal government and oversees approximately 1.3 million acres of trust land which contains significant oil and gas deposits. The Tribal Business Committee is the governing council of the Tribe.