

Business Committee Meets with Colorado Governor Polis on Hunting and Fishing Rights in Colorado

On March 11, 2022, the Business Committee participated in the annual Ute Day events at the Colorado Capitol at the invitation of Colorado Governor Jared Polis and Lt. Governor Diane Primavera. The events included an address by Chairman Chapoose; Chairman Heart from the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe; and Chairman Baker from the Southern Ute Indian Tribe. Lt. Governor Primavera read a proclamation by Governor Polis declaring Ute Day at the Capitol. Next, the tribal leaders were guests of the Colorado Senate and House while they were in session. The Senate and House each recognized the tribal leaders in attendance and provided remarks by Colorado legislators recognizing the tribes.

The Business Committee also attended a meeting with Colorado Governor Polis, Lt. Governor Primavera, and tribal leaders from the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and the Southern Ute Indian Tribe during Ute Day. The meeting was held in Governor Polis' conference room at the Colorado Capitol Building. The Business Committee addressed Governor Polis and Lt. Governor Primavera concerning enforcement of the Brunot Agreement, which would recognize the Tribe's hunting and fishing rights in Colorado.



Left: Business Committee Members with Tribal Leaders from the Ute Mountain Ute and Southern Ute Tribes; Right: Southern Ute Chairman Baker, Ute Indian Tribe Business Committee Chairman Chapoose, and Ute Mountain Ute Chairman Heart on the Stairs in the CO Capitol Rotunda

Governor Polis asked questions about the Brunot Agreement and the Business Committee provided information to Governor Polis and his legal counsel. The Business Committee indicated it would follow up with Governor Polis for further discussions on the Tribe's request.

The Uintah, White River and Uncompahgre Bands now located on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation were signatories to the 1874 Brunot Agreement which extended hunting and fishing rights to approximately 3.7 million acres inside the San Juan Mountains. The factual and legal situations regarding the Brunot Agreement allow for extension of hunting and fishing rights to all Bands of the Ute Indian Tribe.

In 1874, certain bands of the Utes ceded large portions of their 1868 reservation to the federal government under the Brunot Agreement. The area ceded, commonly called the Brunot Area, is approximately 3.7 million acres inside the San Juan Mountain region in the State of Colorado. The Brunot Area extends roughly from U.S. Highway 160 on the south to the southern boundaries of Montrose and Gunnison Counties on the north and from the middle of Mineral County to the east to just west of Cortez on the west. As compensation for agreeing to cede lands in the Brunot Area, the bands of Utes were granted rights to "hunt upon said [Brunot Area] so long as the game lasts and the Indians are at peace with the white people".



Left – Councilman Murray, Lt. Governor Diane Primavera, Chairman Chapoose, Vice Chairman Secakuku, and Councilman Tabee

Right – Chairman Chapoose Addresses the Ute Day at the Colorado Capitol

While in Colorado, the Business Committee also met with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Social Security Administration (SSA). They met with the EPA to discuss pending EPA enforcement actions impacting the Tribe's energy development on the Reservation. The Business Committee met with SSA to request an exemption of tribal dividend payments from being counted as income or resources when Tribal members apply for Supplemental Security Income.