MINUTES

NATURAL RESOURCES, AGRICULTURE, AND ENVIRONMENT INTERIM COMMITTEE

UTAH STATE LEGISLATURE

Wednesday, September 16, 2026 | 8:30 a.m. | 110 Senate Building

Members Present:
Sen. Keven J. Stratton, Chair
Rep. Carl R. Albrecht, Chair
Sen. Nate Blouin
Sen. David P. Hinkins
Sen. Derrin R. Owens
Rep. John Arthur
Rep. Walt Brooks
Rep. Scott H. Chew
Rep. Michael L. Kohler
Rep. Logan J. Monson
Rep. Thomas W. Peterson
Rep. Rex P. Shipp
Rep. Casey Snider
Rep. R. Neil Walter
Rep. Christine F. Watkins

Members Absent:
Sen. Scott D. Sandall
Rep. Bridger Bolinder
Rep. Doug Owens
Speaker Mike Schultz

Staff Present:
Charley Hart, Policy Analyst
Julie Humberstone, Managing Policy Analyst
Patricia Owen, Senior Associate General Counsel
Ryan C. Williams, Associate General Counsel
Alyssa Castor, Administrative Assistant

Note: A copy of related materials and an audio recording of the meeting can be found at le.utah.gov.

Chair Stratton called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

1. Axtell Facility

1 - Wild Horse and Burro Program Presentation (Bureau of Land Management)

Heath Weber, Manager, Axtell Wild Horse and Burro Facility, and Chad Hunter, Branch Chief, Axtell Wild Horse and Burro Facility, presented information regarding wild horse and burro management at the Bureau of Land Management's privately contracted holding facility in Axtell, Utah.

Heath Weber and Chad Hunter answered questions from the committee.

Gary Carlisle, rancher, provided public comment.

Heath Weber and Chad Hunter continued to answer questions from the committee.

2. Committee Business

MOTION: Rep. Albrecht moved to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2026, meeting. The motion passed with a vote of 12 - 0 - 7.

Yeas - 12	Nays - 0	Absent - 7
Rep. C. Albrecht		Rep. B. Bolinder
Rep. J. Arthur		Rep. S. Chew
Sen. N. Blouin		Sen. D. Owens
Rep. W. Brooks		Rep. D. Owens
Sen. D. Hinkins		Sen. S. Sandall
Rep. M. Kohler		Rep. M. Schultz
Rep. L. Monson		Rep. C. Snider
Rep. T. Peterson		
Rep. R. Shipp		
Sen. K. Stratton		
Rep. R. Walter		
Rep. C. Watkins		

3. Rescue Food

3 - Food Recovery Presentation (Rescue Food)

David Peterson, Director, Rescue Food, presented information on a conceptual proposal that would facilitate food rescue and reconditioning operations.

David Peterson answered questions from the committee.

Public comment was heard from:

Lori Peterson, volunteer, Rescue Food;

Gayle Ruzicka, President, Eagle Forum; and

Julie Jackson, resident.

MOTION: Rep. Albrecht moved to open a committee bill file to address food waste. The motion passed with a vote of 10 - 0 - 9.

Yeas - 10	Nays - 0	Absent - 9
Rep. C. Albrecht		Sen. N. Blouin
Rep. J. Arthur		Rep. B. Bolinder
Rep. W. Brooks		Rep. M. Kohler
Rep. S. Chew		Rep. L. Monson
Sen. D. Hinkins		Sen. D. Owens
Rep. T. Peterson		Rep. D. Owens
Rep. R. Shipp		Sen. S. Sandall
Sen. K. Stratton		Rep. M. Schultz
Rep. R. Walter		Rep. C. Snider
Rep. C. Watkins		

4. Meat Production

4 - Local Beef Supply Chain Presentation (Bar W Beef)

Korey Wright, Owner, Bar W Beef, presented information on meat processing.

Korey Wright and answered questions from the committee.

Public comment was heard from:

Robert Judd, owner, Spring Lake Trout Farm;

Harry Hansen, resident; and

Kael Weston, resident.

5. Meat Donations

Troy Forrest, Deputy Commission, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF), and Travis Doxey, Meat Inspection Program Manager, UDAF, presented information regarding the acceptance of certain meat products by food banks and schools and answered questions from the committee.

6. Aquaculture

6 - Private Aquaculture Presentation (Department of Agriculture and Food)

Troy Forrest and Amanda Price, State Veterinarian, UDAF, presented information regarding Utah's aquaculture industry and answered questions from the committee.

Justin Shannon, Director, Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR), and Andrew Cushing, Aquatics Chief, DWR, answered questions from the committee.

Public comment was heard from:

Neal Barker, owner, Cold Springs Trout Farm;

Terry Camp, Vice President of Public Policy, Utah Farm Bureau;

Herbert Ley, biochemist;

Dennis Blackburn, resident, Wayne County;

Robert Judd; and

Tarah Holt, Cold Springs Trout Farm.

7. Utah Food Systems Study

7 - Food Systems Study (Department of Agriculture and Food)

7 - Utah Food Systems Study Presentation (Utah Department of Agriculture and Food)

Caroline Scheidell, Director of Marketing and Economic Development, UDAF, presented findings of a study examining barriers to local food systems.

8. Agricultural Burns

8 - Agricultural Burn Permitting Presentation (Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands)

Brianne Emery, Acting Director, Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands, presented information regarding agricultural burning, when it is permitted, recommended changes, and answered questions from the committee.

9. Beef Council Audit

9 - Beef Council Audit Presentation (Office of the Legislative Auditor General)

Leah Blevins, Audit Manager, Office of Legislative Auditor General (OLAG), and Matthias Boone, Audit Supervisor, OLAG, presented findings and recommendations regarding the Performance Audit of the Utah Beef Council.

Brent Tanner, Executive Director, Utah Beef Council, reported improvements being implemented after the audit.

10. Adjourn

MOTION: Rep. Arthur moved to adjourn. The motion passed with a vote of 9 - 0 - 10.

Yeas - 9	Nays - 0	Absent - 10
Rep. C. Albrecht		Rep. B. Bolinder
Rep. J. Arthur		Rep. W. Brooks
Sen. N. Blouin		Sen. D. Hinkins
Rep. S. Chew		Rep. D. Owens
Rep. M. Kohler		Rep. T. Peterson
Rep. L. Monson		Sen. S. Sandall
Sen. D. Owens		Rep. M. Schultz
Rep. R. Shipp		Rep. C. Snider
Sen. K. Stratton		Rep. R. Walter
		Rep. C. Watkins

Chair Stratton adjourned the meeting at 11:13 a.m.