



State-Tribal Relations Interim Committee

59th Montana Legislature

PO BOX 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706
(406) 444-3064
FAX (406) 444-3036

SENATE MEMBERS

JERRY O'NEIL
GERALD PEASE
FRANK SMITH
DONALD STEINBEISSER

HOUSE MEMBERS

JOAN ANDERSEN
GORDON HENDRICK
JOEY JAYNE
JONATHAN WINDY BOY

COMMITTEE STAFF

CHRIS LOHSE, Lead Staff
EDDYE MCCLURE, Staff Attorney
DAWN FIELD, Secretary

Proposed Work Plan Concept Map State-Tribal Relations Committee

Over the course of the interim, the state-tribal relations committee will be examining economic development in Indian Country. To that end, the committee staff recommends a cooperative work plan with entities like the Governor's Office, the Department of Commerce, the Department of Corrections, Tribal Governments, and public and private research organizations for the purposes of data collection and analysis. The staff's role will be to pull together the disparate and diffuse research findings available in the state, organize the information into a comprehensive and cohesive research study, and to encourage conversations about ultimate findings that may lead to effective policy recommendations. As questions emerge, staff will pursue new research avenues and independent studies.

Because of the proposed overlap with executive agencies, we propose inter-agency agreements to clarify the relationships and roles of cooperating groups. We envision two-way working relationships, wherein legislative staff willingly exchanges independent findings, recommendations, and analyses.

Reports of findings and staff updates will be a consistent feature of upcoming agendas. Relevant research will be consistently reported to the committee, allowing the committee to be responsive to emerging research needs and to suggest new directions for the study.

The proposed final report of the committee, and its attendant policy and legislative recommendations, may take on a slightly unconventional look and feel. We currently imagine a more narrative and user-friendly document than is often produced at the conclusion of an interim session. We hope this format will encourage broader understanding of the report's most salient features, helping to inform rich, effective, and accurate policy debates in the legislative session.

The timeline, detailing deliverables and deadlines for phases of the study, may be more of a "work in progress" than is traditional for interim committees. It is the hope of staff that this more flexible, fluid work plan will create a final document that is truly representative of the committee's interests, findings, and to the extent possible, ultimate beliefs.

Updates on research will be posted to the website via the hyperlink labeled, "Readings." Members who cannot easily access the web may make arrangements to have their updates mailed to them. A summer report can be expected mid-August on American Indian Student Achievement, and community socio-economic health.

**State-Tribal Relations Committee Meeting
June 27, 2005**