

ESCOP Budget and Legislative Committee (BLC): <http://escop.info/committee/blc/>
Call MINUTES for: 3/23/2021, 4 pm ET (Fourth Tuesday Monthly)

Committee Members:

<p>Chair: Glenda Humiston (WAAESD) Past Chair: Ernie Minton (NCRA)</p> <p>Delegates: Alton Thompson (ARD) Vernon Jones (ARD) Gary Pierzynski (NCRA) Shawn Donkin (NCRA) Puneet Srivistava (NERA) Anton Bekkerman (NERA) Steve Lommel (SAAESD) Saied Mostaghimi (SAAESD) John Talbott (WAAESD) Chris Pritsos (WAAESD)</p> <p>Executive Vice-Chair Jeff Jacobsen (NCRA ED) Chris Hamilton (NCRA AD; Recorder)</p>	<p>Liaisons: Jon Boren (ECOP) Katie Frazier (CARET) Doug Steele (APLU) Eddie Gouge (APLU) Caron Gala (APLU) Jim Richards (CGA) Hunt Shipman (CGA) Vernie Huber (CGA) Maggie Earle (CGA) Kim Whittet (NIFA) Paula Geiger (NIFA) Kate Fink (NIFA) Glen Hoffsis (BVM) Laura Jolly (BHS)</p>
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Participants: Alton Thompson, Vernon Jones, Gary Pierzynski, Shawn Donkin, Puneet Srivistava, Steve Lommel, Saied Mostaghimi, John Talbott, Doug Steele, Hunt Shipman, Caron Gala, Vernie Huber, Kate Fink, Bret Hess, Rick Rhodes, Gary Thompson, Jeff Jacobsen, Chris Hamilton (recorder)

Call Agenda/Notes:

1. Welcome and roll call – Done, see participants list above.
2. Approval of 2/23/2021 meeting minutes http://escop.info/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/BLC_MIN_-with_attachments_20210223.pdf) – Approved as distributed.
3. Approval of today’s agenda – Approved as distributed.
4. Infrastructure Update – Jeff
 - This is a huge effort, unlike anything we’ve done before, we’re adjusting as we go and have made significant headway.
 - The team has been having regular meetings and Alton thanked Caron for all her good work and efforts.
 - White House Office of Public Engagement has been very supportive. We’ve been meeting with lots of legislators, as well.
 - Next step: Request a meeting with Secretary Vilsack. We’ve heard that the Biden admin will be releasing a huge infrastructure bill and we hope to be attached to that.

- APLU recently sent out a communications toolbox to add to our advocacy toolbox. Still trying to socialize the Gordian document, both nationally and at the local level. We're working with AES directors to keep this momentum going.
- Have also engaged with the White House Office of Science, Technology, and Policy (OSTP).
- Regional EDs have also asked state AES and ARD directors to fill out a table to give quick information on engagement with whom/how at the state levels. Hoping this information will help inform the core group and others on what we should do next.
- CARET "Call to Action" coming in April, along with additional stakeholder letter. Moses Kairo has indicated we might need to present these action items in a webinar for clarity. A "Dear Colleague" letter is also in the works, stay tuned for that release as well as KS, OK, etc., op-eds from Ernie Minton, Tom Coon.
- Many to-dos coming for "Advocacy April!"
- Congressional action not anticipated on this until later in the summer. Hoping for bipartisan negotiations, which may work in our favor. Still seeking Democratic support champion in the Senate.
- The group later discussed the infrastructure request and size of institution, renovation versus rebuilds, etc. Jeff indicated that these points have been discussed and included in the ARIA group discussions and we have internal language lined up for when the funds are appropriated.

5. APLU Update – Doug Steele

- FANR newsletter will be released tomorrow. Will have a retirement celebration for Eddie Gouge next week and the link will be in that update. National virtual seminar for Earth Day link will also be in the newsletter. Please look for both and attend if you can.
- New assistant VP for External Relations job announcement will be released tomorrow, as well. Screening to start very soon. (This is the Forbes Tate recommended position for BAA communications/CMC consultant.)
- Continued engagement with NIFA leadership and the EDA research and Extension team, about every 6 weeks or so.
- Will continue to evaluate the success of and balance virtual meetings versus face to face as we go forward and as things open up more.
- There will be a Food and Ag Climate Alliance (FACA) meeting tomorrow with 6 working groups, 8 priority issues to share. One topic Doug shared is the NRCS issue around the lack of soil testing labs across the country. Soils and these labs are critical for the capture of carbon/carbon credits certification. Jeff will share multistate committee names on soil testing and proficiency testing for state and local/private labs with Doug and Gary before tomorrow's call. (DONE, [see below](#))

6. Cornerstone Report – Hunt, Vernie

- We're in the middle of appropriations request season.
- Request deadline was extended by two weeks later in April due to earmark discussions and the associated rules around those. NIFA accounts are not allowed to be earmarked, so this probably doesn't affect our efforts for FY22 process too much. ARS and Rural Development Broadband are included as being eligible for earmarks, but only in the House. Jeff requested some additional clarity on earmarks to share with directors; Hunt shared this link in the chat: <https://appropriations.house.gov/appropriations-requests>. "Community Project Funding" = earmark.

- Institutions should be contacting their Congressional reps now regarding the annual appropriations.
 - Congressional hearings are starting around climate, but the focus currently is on appropriations requests.
7. NIFA update – Kate
 - Kate thanked the group for all the useful information the BLC calls give her.
 - Still awaiting more information on the NIFA budget. More to come on this.
 - Hiring is still happening, except for the pause in senior admin hiring due to the change in administration. Currently hired up to about 2/3 of total, progress is good.
 8. ECOP report – None given; Jon couldn't join the call today.
 9. BHS report – None given; Laura also was unable to join today.
 10. Climate Change Discussion – Tabled for the April BLC call, although Rick Rhodes emphasized that the Climate survey very much supports our infrastructure ask, based on needed facilities, equipment, etc.
 11. Other business, as needed – none.

Call adjourned at 4:59 pm ET.

Soil Testing Resources: Some existing (multistate) projects related to your topics with FACA. One could go to NIMSS at <https://www.nimss.org> and read more about each one if you dare to.....

NCERA13 Soil Testing and Plant Analysis

NCERA59 Soil Organic Matter: Formation, Function and Management

NCERA103 Specialized Soil Amendments and Products, Growth Stimulants...

NECC1812 Northeast Coordinating Committee on Soil Testing

WERA103 Nutrient Management and Water Quality

SERA6 Methodology, Interpretation and Implementation of Soil, Plant, Byproduct and Water Analysis

The national lab proficiency testing program that I was thinking of is this:

NAPT – The North American Proficiency Testing Program <https://www.naptprogram.org/> enrolled through the Soil Science Society of America (1 of 3 Trisocieties).