

Message from OSFA President – March 7, 2011

Late last night, the Senate Judiciary Committee tabled SB 421 with a 6-4 vote. So, the legislation is effectively dead on the Senate side. (The Senate could call it to the floor for a vote, but such an action is extremely rare).

Earlier in the day, as expected, the House Energy and Natural Resources committee moved HB 422 out of that committee with a Do Pass/No Recommendation vote of 8-4. HB 422 will now go to the House Judiciary Committee, however, without a companion bill being passed in the Senate, it is unlikely that the bill will become law.

Thanks to all who contacted legislators. It made a difference as the hearing rooms were always filled with supporters of the bills. Support also came from several professional lobbyists, of which we had none. Many preservationists and tribal leaders spoke in opposition to the legislation. Especially helpful in the hearings were the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the New Mexico Preservation Alliance, the American Institute of Architects, the Pueblo of Acoma, the Pueblo of Laguna, the League of Conservation Voters, and several retired, but active and vocal, preservationists. On several occasions, we waited for several hours for a hearing to begin, only to find that the bill had been removed from the agenda and wouldn't be heard that day. Yet, no one complained.

House Memorial 50

(<http://www.nmlegis.gov/lcs/session.aspx?Chamber=H&LegType=M&LegNo=50&year=11>), "Uranium Task Force Creation," was introduced and may be heard tomorrow. The memorial calls for a task force to study the effects of uranium mining on the environment, communities, and historic preservation. It specifically calls for the Historic Preservation Division to be part of the task force. There doesn't seem to be a reason for the archaeological community to oppose this memorial.