

**Minutes**  
**TOPIC SELECTION SUBCOMMITTEE**  
**Legislative Audit Commission**  
**March 5, 2012**

Members Present:

Senator Roger Reinert, Chair  
Representative Sondra Erickson  
Representative Rick Hansen

Members Absent:

Senator Mike Parry

The meeting of the Topic Selection Subcommittee of the Legislative Audit Commission was called to order by Senator Roger Reinert, Chair, at 10:01 a.m.

Legislative Auditor Jim Nobles said that the purpose of the meeting was to review the list of evaluation topics suggested by legislators and others. Mr. Nobles introduced Judy Randall, Evaluation Manager, who organized the topic selection process this year. Ms. Randall said that the list of 91 suggested topics was a record. She explained that the subcommittee needed to narrow these down to 10 – 12 “semi-finalists.” Senator Reinert asked her to go over the criteria for selecting the topics. Ms. Randall explained the six criteria are state resources, state control, impact, timeliness, feasibility, and balance. Senator Reinert inquired about an OLA scoring of the topics at this point. Mr. Nobles explained that with so many topics, it is a daunting task; however, he reminded the subcommittee that this step would be done for the semi-finalist topics.

Representative Hansen asked Mr. Nobles to go through the list and cut out the topic suggestions that were the same as or similar to those evaluations that were recently completed. Mr. Nobles explained that OLA conducts follow-up reviews on a number of previous topics but that some may be too soon to complete, such as the sex offender program. Ms. Randall added that some topics had been evaluated in the past; however, several of them were evaluated 10-15 years ago, and it is not too soon to evaluate them again. She also said that some of the suggested topics overlap with recently completed evaluations. In response to Senator Reinert, Ms. Randall said that the Enforcement of Vehicle Size and Weight Restrictions had been chosen as a finalist the previous year, but OLA had run out of time to complete it; therefore, it was added to the list for this year. Senator Reinert suggested putting the Vehicle Size and Weight Restrictions topic back on the list of semi-finalists, and asked each member to go through the proposed list of topics and name their top three choices.

The 14 topics selected by the subcommittee for further consideration were:

- Special Education
- Compensatory Aid
- School District Governance
- Community-Based Energy Development (C-BED)
- Minnesota Petrofund
- School Trust Lands
- Environmental Regulation through Administrative Rulemaking
- Agricultural Commodity Councils
- Conservation Easements
- State-Operated Services
- Medicaid Dental Reimbursement Rates

MnDOT Pavement Selection Process  
Enforcement of Vehicle Size and Weight Restrictions  
Law Enforcement Databases

In response to Senator Reinert, Ms. Randall said that the following day a survey would be sent to all legislators to determine their interest in the “semi-finalist” topics. She said the deadline to return the ballots would be Wednesday, March 21. She also explained that in the meantime, OLA staff would draft background papers on these topics, which would help members make a final selection to present to the full Legislative Audit Commission on Monday, March 26.

Mr. Nobles reminded the members of the upcoming release of *Helping Communities Recover from Natural Disasters* on Thursday, March 8. With no further business, Senator Reinert adjourned the meeting at 10:54 a.m.

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Senator Roger Reinert, Chair

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Shelly Watterud, Recording Secretary