

Gov. Brian Sandoval's Press Briefing on Meetings with Trump Administration Officials

Carson City, NV - April 28, 2017

Governor: I wanted to give you all a synopsis of my visit and why I did it in the first place and it essentially grew from there. Originally I had been invited to join with Governors Mead and Hickenlooper in Washington, D.C. with western issues associated with the sage grouse and the monuments as well as wild horses and many different issues and from there, I like to be very efficient with my time, so we asked for meetings with several members of the cabinet and I was immediately given a meeting with the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, the Attorney General of the United States, the Secretary of Energy. I was also asked to attend a breakfast meeting at the White House with some White House staffers associated with infrastructure issues and then I was also asked to attend the signing of the executive order by the President associated with education. I was also invited to have a speaking part in that, which was a big honor for me. That happened in the last 12 hours before I left.

So I left Tuesday morning, arrived in Washington Tuesday evening. I immediately got off the plane and **went directly to the Environmental Protection Agency and met with Administrator Pruitt.** We had had a prior phone call. The two most important topics that we talked about on that phone call that followed up at this meeting was, number one, I don't know if many of you follow this, but Nevada has probably the most robust bonding requirements in the United States. We have billions in reserve in terms of reclamation for our mines, so if we have a **mining** operation, if they go out of business or they complete their mining, obviously from an environmental perspective, we want to ensure that those mines are restored. There was a proposal by the Environmental Protection Agency by the previous administration to have essentially, to put in a federal process that would require our mining industry to do exactly what they have already done, which wouldn't really provide any additional layer of protection for the environment because it was already taken care of. This is

something that would be extremely expensive for our mining industry and literally the recent feedback that I got from the mining industry could put some mines out of business because they essentially didn't have the capital to put toward that and as I said, at the end of the day, what's most important to me is to ensure that we have that protection and we have it through our own state process.

In the conversation with the Administrator, the EPA had already extended the comment period. That was to ensure and to educate him and his staff that Nevada, again, already has a robust process in that regard, and so I think that he received that very positively and the comment period, I believe, extends through July, is that right? Sometime in there and we'll have an answer, but it was a great opportunity to give Administrator Pruitt more of a description and education with regard to the mining industry in Nevada.

The next topic of conversation with the Administrator was the **Anaconda Mine in Yerington**. As you all know, that mine has been a subject -- that has been closed for decades — and there have been the environmental issues associated with that. With [inaudible] the EPA we had been in conversations because there really was never enough private capital that was raised to allow for the cleanup of that mine so there was a discussion of it becoming a Superfund site which would allow for federal funds to come in and to be able to clean up the site. My reluctance with regard to having it being declared a Superfund site is at least twofold. One of which is obviously that's devastating to Yerington and the agricultural committee there or community there to be declared a Superfund site because of the negative connotations that come with that. The second layer of that is that several sites in the United States have been declared Superfund sites but the funding hasn't come to clean them and so you get the declaration of that scarlet letter of being declared a Superfund site and then it just sits there for decades. So now our understanding is there's a great opportunity and potential for a private funder, BP I believe it is, to come in and be able to fund the cleanup and have it overseen by the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection, which would allow us to avoid a

Superfund designation, and that was the second part of my discussion with the Administrator. We believe and are confident that we can get that private funder to come in and begin that cleanup, which will allow it to be cleaned up less expensively and sooner.

Geoff Dornan: What's in it for the private funder?

Sandoval: Because they have a vested interest in that mine. They own it and so yes. So it's a win-win and in particular for the agricultural community out there, I think it's in your paper today, Geoff.

Geoff Dornan: I've been at the DMV since 7:45. If I'm not in a good mood, you'll understand why.

Sandoval: But one of the world's largest organic onion farms is out there in Yerington and they have massive organic farms and things up there and they abut the Anaconda mine site.

Sandi Chereb: Governor, just to remind you that this is going through my head, but we had a press briefing with Leo (Drozdoff) a couple months ago and other people about Anaconda and you had, correct me if I'm wrong, was that agreement with the EPA? I know that you had been opposed to Superfund designation, but was there something where we got more time to try to bring the private parties together?

Sandoval: Well, we always encourage the private parties to come together. The understanding with the EPA in that process was this: they were going to come in and they were going to fund it right away and get it cleaned up a lot sooner, and so with the change in administration, which creates uncertainty in that regard. In the meantime, the private funder BP has stepped forward and has been willing to come up with that funding to clean that and now it's a matter of putting that to paper and formalizing that and getting it done. So I don't want...it's one of those things, once that declaration, that Superfund designation is made, it's hard to walk that back, so that's what I've done with this issue. It's really important to get everyone at the table with the EPA, the private

fundes, and the state together, because the best outcome here is for the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection to oversee the cleanup of that site and have the private money to come in to get that done and then have it done in half the time, then obviously the community, Lyon County, everybody out there can move forward, because it's been sitting out there for decades, the way it is now.

Sandi Chereb: Getting back to the mining, the part [inaudible] was talking about.

Sandoval: Yes.

Sandi Chereb: You stated Nevada already has astringent requirements, so the EPA's view of it would be nationwide. Are you asking to let the states come up with their own model within some kind of parameters?

Sandoval: Well I'm the Governor and I'm going to speak for our state and we have the most mature, robust mining regulations in the country. If we were a country, we'd be the fifth largest gold producer in the world and so we have the most sophisticated mining operations, operators, in the world as well and the point being, we already have a system in place to take care of this and so it obviously is not a one size fits all. There may be other states that aren't as mature and sophisticated as we are in that regard, I just don't want to be penalized because other states aren't as strong as we are. So I think that if you follow up, I came away from that meeting optimistic in terms of they were very receptive. I have invited the Administrator to come visit a Nevada mine. I have invited the Administrator to tour the Anaconda site. And then I've also invited the Administrator to not only come to Nevada to attend the Western Governors Meeting in June, which will be in Montana, which will be another opportunity to familiarize him about the specific issues and western issues.

Michelle Rindels: So these processes to move forward towards declaring it a Superfund site and then also the rule that we discussed on hard rock mining, those are set in motion by the previous administration and what power does this current administration have? You're

saying they're receptive to your ideas. I mean how much can change because we're under a more sympathetic...

Sandoval: Well I think that the Administrator has complete discretion to do what he wants to do. So these weren't finalized rules. That's why there's a comment period that's going on right now associated with those hard rock mining rules and the Superfund designation. These are Nevada-specific issues associated with Region 9 so that's continued dialogue and as I said, at the end of the day I'm going to do what's in the best interests of Nevada. In my opinion, it is in the best interest to have it done by a private funder, cheaper and sooner, and having it overseen by the Nevada Department of Environmental Protection. What better result could there be? So that was essentially that meeting.

So to move on, so the next morning, I guess that would be Wednesday morning, yes, Wednesday morning I had been invited to breakfast at the White House to meet with two staffers at the White House with regard to infrastructure. As you may or may not know, the administration had already reached out, the transportation had reached out and asked me to provide the administration with a list of **infrastructure priorities** that was brought up with the President, talked about it, he talked about it in the State of the Union, and he's talked about it otherwise, the infrastructure, funding infrastructure is one of the major priorities for his administration. So we provided him with that list. There is a list of projects for both north and south that included Project Neon, included Spaghetti Bowl in Northern Nevada, with infrastructure out at Apex, it included Interstate 11. What else, help me Mari here?

Mari St. Martin: That list was sent to the NGA.

Speaker: Yeah, but those are the four -- infrastructure for the Tahoe Reno Industrial Complex development, the train between Las Vegas and Southern California, so these are all big infrastructure problems that we'd like to be considered. And so, again, my takeaway from the meeting was this, is that the administration wants to work with states that have done things to help themselves, which Nevada has

done, as you know, with Clark County, approved the fuel indexing question last November which added billions of dollars of funds to transportation projects there. Northern Nevada approved fuel indexing even sooner than that, I think two or four years ago, so the White House or the administration was not aware of that. We also, in this current budget that is being considered across the mall restored the GST (government services tax) to go toward the Highway Fund when you register your vehicle, so that is something that is adding money to infrastructure. I also talked about, I signed last session the bond rollovers for education and the fact that we continue those bonds and then in my own opinion that education facilities are infrastructure as well. So the White House I think was impressed with the fact that Nevada is really progressive in the sense that we are funding our roads and our bridges and our infrastructure and they asked for more information and we will continue to work with them.

Reporter: Who did you meet with?

Sandoval: Do you have their titles, Mari?

Mari St. Martin: It was DJ Gribbin, which said to me was G-R-I-B-B-I-N, and he's a Special Assistant to the President for Infrastructure Policy, and then Justin Clark, and he's the White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Sandi Chereb: C-L-A-R-K?

Mari St. Martin: Clark, yes. Like Clark County.

Sandi Chereb: You never know if there's an E in there, okay?

Sandoval: At the end of the day, for me, Nevada is...any type of opportunity to get more resources for infrastructure is a good thing, and so if we can expedite any additional funding adding onto Project Neon in Southern Nevada, what's going on there, and any of you who have driven in Las Vegas recently have seen that project is moving on schedule and on budget so I'm really pleased with how that's going. And I'm worried and I've already talked about publicly,

regarding the Spaghetti Bowl in Reno, where 395 and the 80 meet, that there's a lot of congestion there and some safety issues there and for people who live in the north valleys, there's been some long delays for them, so if there's a way to expedite the funding and the permitting requirements of that project, we want to do that. Interstate 11 has been a priority for me since 2011 and we've worked really hard to get the Boulder City Bypass approved, which was the first piece of the I-11 and how if we can expedite in any way the construction of Interstate 11 between Phoenix and Las Vegas and from Las Vegas to Reno, I want to get that done. Apex, one of the things holding it back is infrastructure out there, the water and the rail and any way that we can push that forward so we can get some more economic development out there in the Apex park. Same thing with TRIC, we've been having a lot of success out there. There's a big announcement recently about Google buying 1,200 acres, but the more infrastructure that we can put in there, the better. So that was the specific nature of the meeting with the White House on infrastructure. If you have any questions I can respond to those.

Sandi Chereb: Was there any discussion about how realistic the White House's agenda is with infrastructure getting into Congress?

Sandoval: Not really. I mean obviously for them, these are their priorities. It's just like here where we have 38 days, but it's a process and I think there is a lot of signs and support for investment and for infrastructure, that not only improves our infrastructure, but improves jobs and new jobs, so it was positive. I'm not naïve. I know this is subject to budget approval, but certainly infrastructure is something that most people can agree on.

Michelle Rindels: What was the specific ask on the train, the XPress West?

Sandoval: Well, the President has talked about already that high speed rail is another thing that he's interested in and I think for me it's another...the new administration is educating them that we have a project that's very mature, that it has the right of way, that it would really help with the congestion on the interstate there and allow for movement of people between Las Vegas and Southern California,

so, again, I think it was positive. I just got a letter on my desk from the Department of Transportation. I wrote a letter in support of XPress West and got a letter back saying that we appreciate this and we'll be reviewing it. So the one thing I'll tell you all is I'm **very impressed the turnaround on things in terms of our requesting resources with the administration**, with our funding that we have, I've gotten two approvals within a couple of weeks associated with these disaster declarations. This grant that you all saw through a release yesterday for over \$5 million for opioid abuse, that was something that was done within our Department of Health and Human Services and associated with that. [Inaudible] Las Vegas and that was approved within a matter of weeks. Anytime that I ask for a meeting with any member of the president's cabinet, I get it. I get facetime with the actual cabinet members, not someone sublevel, so it's been extremely positive in that regard.

Michelle Rindels: How does that compare with the previous administration?

Sandoval: Well, I mean it didn't always, I mean I'm not going to...I don't mean this to be pejorative of the prior administration, because I had great relationships with all of the cabinet members over there in that administration as well, but we didn't get that type of turnaround in terms of funding requests, grant requests, like we are getting now, and frankly, I'll get into it with the Secretary of the Interior, but as I said, I literally within days got confirmation for these meetings with these cabinet secretaries. It's unprecedented for me to have facetime with four cabinet secretaries within 24 hours as well as representatives from the White House, so that's a positive thing for our state.

Alison Noon: Have those dollars started to roll in or is it that at this point a promise?

Sandoval: Oh, it's rolling in. I mean I can't tell you sitting here the actual dollars that have been deposited in the account, but it's a done deal in terms of those disaster declarations, which not only benefits the state, but most importantly the local governments and it helps them and reimburses them in terms of the outlays that they've done

associated with the snowpack coming down and then the opioid funding but I guess it's the proverbial check is in the mail, but I have no reason to doubt that all of that that money's going to actually come.

Mike Willden: [Inaudible].

Sandoval: And that was part of the grant. We submitted the grant and we say you give us this money and this is how we're going to spend it. They review that grant application, they obviously were impressed with it and have approved it, and now that money is going to come as we set up those programs and obviously we can't hire people before we've got the grant request, and now we're able to do that.

Alison Noon: You're talking about the opioid grant?

Sandoval: Yes.

Alison Noon: What about the disaster relief fund. Have those...

Sandoval: I can find out for you, but I am pretty confident that we are.

Alison Noon: I was just asking.

Sandoval: So any other questions with regard to infrastructure and the White House? So next meeting was with **Secretary Perry at the Department of Energy** and this was a follow up to our meeting in Las Vegas that we had subsequent to his visit to the Yucca Mountain and...

Sandi Chereb: Did you know about his visit to Yucca Mountain before he did it?

Sandoval: I did. I did. And it's no secret that he and I have a past relationship because he being the Governor of Texas and my being the Governor here. He's somebody that I know and respect and I spoke with him during his confirmation process. I congratulated him when he was confirmed. I never, let me put it this way, I've always made it extremely clear to him that when it comes to the **Yucca Mountain**, I am absolute in my opposition to that project,

that whether we're friends or not, we're not friends on this, that I would do everything in my power to oppose that project. I will use every legal opportunity at our disposal to attack the assigning of the Yucca Mountain as a high level nuclear repository in our state, so we have our conversation every time I talk with him with that, just to make sure that there is a light there associated with Yucca Mountain and he understands that. So it was a bit ironic, I know some of you had probably thought or said that the very time that we were meeting was the hearing in the — Congressman Shimkus was having a hearing on proposed legislation in that regard, which I felt our Congressional delegation did a great job of appearing and presenting the terms of their opposition and also I submitted a letter for the record to be included in the record to reiterate the opposition to the Yucca Mountain project.

Geoff Dornan: Are you suggesting Secretary Perry [inaudible]?

Speaker: Well, what I told him was this, is that we're all supportive of consent-based process and he's got a place in his home state that is willing to take it and so, I mean on an interim level, but in any event, I know people can find interim in different ways, but we've said all along it should be a consent-based process. It shouldn't be forced on a state that doesn't want it. I reminded him that we're home to the Nellis Air Force Base, the Creech Air Force Base, the Fallon Naval Air Station, the National Nuclear Security Site that we've had those testing that has happened out there. I reminded him of what happened to the down-winders as a result of the testing that happened out there, and this isn't just a NIMBY thing, this isn't we just don't want it in our backyard. I am convinced in my experience in the Legislature and as the attorney general and now as governor, that it is not a site that can geologically isolate the waste. It is a fractured rock that sits on an earthquake fault above an aquifer that can't safely store it. There's a reason why they have to put titanium shield above the casks that would hold that nuclear waste. It's because the moisture drips through the mountain and they have to be able to watch that moisture and that moisture flows through there a [inaudible] 50 years. It can't be done. It can't [inaudible]. I feel really strongly about that and that's why I had another meeting to instruct the Attorney General

[inaudible] that case in Texas, that underlying consent-based process, and could possibly be viewed as being able to expedite the procedure for licensing to bring that to Nevada. So I'm telling you, there will be no mercy and no quarter when it comes to Yucca Mountain as long as I'm here.

Sandi Chereb: So what was his response to...

Sandoval: His response is I understand.

Sandi Chereb: So why are they now actively looking at Yucca Mountain [inaudible]? What is their rationale in their wish to do that? What did he say?

Sandoval: Well, he didn't say, but in the words of [State of Nevada Agency for Nuclear Projects Director] Bob Halstead, it's Screw Nevada II and we are the only designated proposed high level nuclear waste site in the country and there has always been an effort to continue to make that the place and Senator Reid and the Obama Administration in there with opposition and not funding of that, obviously there's \$100 million, whatever the number is, in the current budget, by the way it's not been approved, but is proposed, and so I think it's just a continuation of what was discussed before.

Sandi Chereb: So the secretary didn't say, "I'm sorry Governor, but this is a priority for the administration and we're going to push for it or..."

Sandoval: Well, I'm not going to put words in the Secretary's mouth...

Sandi Chereb: But the tone of the conversation...

Speaker: The tone of the conversation is basically they have a job to do and so do I and so I'm going to do my job better than they do.

Alison Noon: You compliment the administration for listening to you and other governors on other subjects, is this one where you feel like they're listening and it will be a fruitful relationship?

Sandoval: Well, you're friends on some things and others you're not, and this

one we're not.

Sandi Chereb: So do you think it's a real...it's not just talk amongst the administration that we'll be reviving Yucca Mountain, but I mean how serious do you think they are?

Sandoval: Well, I'll put it this way. I'm not going to underestimate anything, so when it comes to...and I get very passionate about this because it's one of those [inaudible] issues for people in our state, most people in our state, I'll put it that way, but regardless of where they are in that, whether they're going to push really hard or kind of hard, we're going to push really hard all the time.

Michelle Rindels: So you're making these arguments and then he sends out a letter that says, "It's becoming clearer that this is the best site." He like, this week, I mean, did he explain why it's becoming clearer and...

Sandoval: Well, I think, if we're thinking about the same letter, I think part of that letter included his tour or reference to his tour of Yucca Mountain and he did tell me in the meantime that he was going to be meeting with the so called experts on his side with regard to the viability of Yucca Mountain. That letter didn't surprise me at all in terms of...I think you're referring to the letter that he submitted to committee. Is that the one you're talking about?

Michelle Rindels: Yeah, Tuesday or something like that.

Sandoval: That was a letter that he submitted to the committee. I don't think it was as absolute as what you're saying. I mean it was more that we're still exploring its viability, but if anything, it certainly shows, or at least demonstrated to me that there is going to be an effort to revive it.

Michelle Rindels: Is that personal relationship helping Nevada's cause, the one that you have with Secretary Perry?

Sandoval: Well, I mean I think it helps because he knows I mean it. The conversation wasn't just exclusive to Yucca Mountain. There were

some positive things that did come out of that conversation as well. There are research monies that can be made available to UNR and UNLV so there's certainly [inaudible] if that could happen. We are going to look into what that specifically is. He did bring up cyber security, which is a priority of mine, that's one of my five priority bills in this legislative session, so there are opportunities to partner on the **cyber security**. Obviously, I think I'd like to do that. An issue that we have, there's a working group that I established with the prior administration and prior Secretary that we have continual dialogue so that the state, particularly me, are not surprised by what is happening with regard to the storage of **low level nuclear waste** and so I think we've got an agreement that we will continue that working group with this administration. Other activities that are ongoing at the National Nuclear Security Site and if there are opportunities for more research there, certainly I'd like to pursue those, but back to the storage of the low level nuclear waste, one of my concerns is that the definition of low level nuclear waste is everything that is not high level nuclear waste so that brings in a whole lot of different types of waste streams and I think that we need more specificity. As you recall, the state had challenged the movement of some, I guess, so called medium level nuclear waste from Tennessee and that was a subject of the prior working group, so we will...given all those areas I thought the meeting was extremely positive and the Secretary was very receptive. In fact, he was the one who initiated the conversation on the items.

Geoff Dornan: As I recall, they changed that definition of low-level waste about 8 to 10 years ago and basically made it less specific. It used to be more stratified.

Sandoval: That's right. So again, I want to know and I'm concerned if something is a radioactive item that butts up against high level nuclear waste, that's something we need to know about. So that was the meeting, unless anyone else has any questions with regard to meeting with Secretary Perry. We will continue dialogue and it was interesting -- today got a call from their office asking for my cell number so I'll take that as a positive sign that the Secretary...

Sandi Chereb: And what's that?

Sandoval: But anyway, so that was a positive meeting. Subsequent to that, I don't know how interested you are, but I was invited to go to the White House and take part in the **signing of that executive order with regard to education** and essentially something that I've always felt very strongly about is that no two states are the same when it comes to education obviously. Our kids are different from kids throughout the United States and their needs. That was the subject of the 2015 session, so more local control, better. That was the nature of that executive order asking Secretary DeVos to explore that, give more discretion to the states, that we can keep that [inaudible] a bottom up rather than a top down approach to education. The vice president was there, the president was there. I didn't have an opportunity to have a separate conversation with the president. **I did ask for an individual meeting with the president, which was declined** only because they're in their 100 day week and this is a very busy week for them. **I have been offered the opportunity to meet with the president on an individual basis in the near future**, which is obviously something that I will take advantage of. In the meantime, we have access to everyone within the administration or within the White House when it comes to any specific issue.

You all know through the ACA discussion a few weeks ago, Mike and I were on the phone continually with White House staff, with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, and others on that very issue, so again, back to what I talked about is that we may not always agree on issues with the administration, but the access that I have is something that I'm very appreciative of, in terms of being able to have those conversations.

Michelle Rindels: So you didn't have like two minutes to give an elevator pitch to him and say...

Sandoval: No.

Michelle Rindels: Okay.

Sandoval: No, I didn't. This was in the Roosevelt Room of the White House and there's the lectern and then there's the desk where he signs the executive order. The vice president came in the room, had some introductory remarks. The Secretary of Education made some remarks. I had the opportunity to make some remarks. The president sat and signed the executive order and I think was actually, he had to run to that meeting with all the senators on North Korea, so his time was truncated, but again, I am confident that I'll have my opportunity to meet with him in the very near future.

So from the White House it was off to Interior and **I had an opportunity to meet with Secretary Zinke** and the Interior is a department that I've worked extensively with through the years on sage grouse specifically and had a great relationship with both of the prior secretaries and had not met with Secretary Zinke, had never met him in my professional career. I was very impressed with him. He was very well briefed on the issues, was actually a meeting that had been requested by Governors Hickenlooper and Mead of Colorado and Wyoming and I had the opportunity to attend as well and we each had an opportunity to talk and **we spoke about the sage grouse** or I spoke about the sage grouse specifically with the Secretary and reminded him that Nevada has very robust and good plans associated with protecting sage grouse. They're still in their decision process in terms of what they're going to do, the Interior, with regard to final decisions on take no action, the Nevada plan or some other plan. Just remind you that my concern has always been that they've included large swaths of mining property that really doesn't add any sage grouse habitats and that we've actually through the state have identified areas that involve leks and sage grouse that weren't even included in the federal plan, so there's a really good balance there that we can actually protect more birds and not abdicate that mining property into Northeast Nevada.

So we talked about that. **We talked about wild horses** and the management or lack thereof of wild horses in Nevada and this is where we've got an issue that we have more wild horses than anybody else by a factor of whatever it is and I advocated that

we'd love to see better management of those wild horses and I think he was receptive to that. **He also talked about his conversations with the BLM and interaction with the public** and that he wants people, when they see a BLM ranger, to see them as being more associated with protecting the parks than law enforcement, so I thought that was a very positive conversation. He is, at least again my impression is he's somebody that's very sensitive to the environment and **we did talk about the monuments** generally and the President has signed an executive order to review the Antiquities Act and the actions that have been taken. That is something that's going to be methodical. I did not get the impression that this was an effort to automatically unwind everything that's been done in the past 20 years with the past administrations. **I invited him to come out and visit Gold Butte.** That's a place that I've been to myself and so that's going to be an ongoing conversation as well. So it was a great opportunity to familiarize the secretary with Nevada-centric issues and Nevada-specific issues. He will be attending a Western Governor's [Association] meeting in Montana in June and so I saw that as a very positive thing as well.

Mari St. Martin: You brought up SNPLMA.

Speaker: Yeah, we did. **I brought up SNPLA, the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act.** I always stumble over that. I finally figured out "sesquicentennial." In any event, again, this is a place where I differ with the administration. SNPLMA has historically been an area where the BLM has auctioned off properties that are adjacent to our urban areas in Southern Nevada. The proceeds from those sales go toward buying sensitive property near Tahoe and has worked extremely well over the years, it's brought in hundreds of millions of dollars that benefitted our state. I want to keep the money for what's it's intended in the first place, because it really isn't anything new. I think over the past two administrations there's been some other proposals to use this SNPLMA money for purposes outside of Nevada. I mean it's very funny because at the governor's meeting -- in Colorado is Hickenlooper, who's just fine with that money going outside of our state. We can't help but laugh about that. So my impression was

that the Secretary was really neutral on that. That's more of a budget issue than anything for him, but I think he gets the point that it's really important to have these opportunities and to have these monies to purchase the sensitive lands, the data we have at Lake Tahoe.

Alison Noon: Was that a last minute invitation to that gathering or did you all...

Sandoval: I kind of invited myself.

Alison Noon: Okay.

Sandoval: Because I heard that Governors Hickenlooper and Mead were having that meeting and so I asked if I could join in. We're friends so he happily allowed me to [inaudible].

Alison Noon: Were all the governors...did you guys coordinate descending on Washington?

Sandoval: No. It wasn't. It was serendipitous because at the White House, Governor Herbert happened to be in town from Utah, the new governor from Alabama was there and I had an opportunity to meet her. Governor Mead was there.

Mari St. Martin: Governor Branstad?

Sandoval: Branstad from Iowa was there he's going to be getting a hearing in the next week or so, the first confirmation to be the new person in China.

Mari St. Martin: Ambassador.

Sandoval: Yeah, Ambassador to China, so it just so happened that we were all coming at the same time and it worked out extremely well.

Sandi Chereb: **Was there any discussion about handing federal lands back to the state?**

Sandoval: Not really. I think it was more of a conversation now and just

making sure that...I mean he's been the secretary for a month now and I think he's getting up to speed with all the specific issues within the states, so I'm sure that conversation will come and I hope it will be a conversation in June at the Western Governor's meeting.

Sandi Chereb: Any discussion or mention of the Bundys?

Sandoval: No, no. That didn't come up. I don't want that to happen again.

Michelle Rindels: Did he say anything specific on that point about wanting BLM to have better interactions with the public? What would that look like?

Sandoval: I think it was more a general comment that he wants the BLM representatives out there not to be viewed as law enforcement, but kind of like a park ranger. You know, that you can see in a national park, when you see the park ranger at a national park you don't view them as automatically law enforcement. You see them as being law enforcement but being stewards of the property as well. So that was it and I got to head home.

Reporters: What about Jeff Sessions?

Reporters: Did you see the Attorney General?

Speaker: Oh, sorry. I can't forget that. I guess that was in between a couple of those meetings, but no, I met with, again, I had never had an opportunity to meet with the Attorney General of the United States. Before, my last visit to the Department of Justice it was when I had my mock judiciary hearing when I was being confirmed as a federal judge, so it was great to visit. **I sat with the attorney general** and four of his attorneys. There were three topics that came up; internet gaming for one, the legalization of marijuana in our state, number two, and the **sanctuary city issue in Clark County**. So I, in no particular order, with regard to the sanctuary city, he actually brought that up and I told him that Las Vegas Metro is actually one of the few law enforcement agencies in the country that has a 287(g) agreement with the Department of

Homeland Security. I think there's been some confusion with regard to that and **I encouraged the attorney general or a member of his staff to have a conversation with Sheriff Lombardo**, because I know I talked to Sheriff Lombardo about this issue as well and so that was pretty much the extent of that. I think it's really important because things get lost in letters and in translation, that there be a direct conversation and the attorney general told me that he already had spoken with Sheriff Lombardo so again, so I don't know if there's anything more on that, but I took away a really positive response with regard to that and the opportunity to have direct communication between Metro and the Department of Justice.

The second issue was marijuana and I don't think the attorney general needed any education, but I just reminded him that the voters of Nevada, or even before that, the voters of Nevada have approved medical marijuana and that it is in our constitution and that it is tightly regulated in our state. The voters in Nevada, although I opposed it, the voters of Nevada have approved recreational marijuana by — I don't know if I'd call it a significant margin, but enough, and that we are in the process, we meaning the state of Nevada, through the Department of Taxation, are promulgating regulations associated with the passage of that ballot question. I can't speak for the attorney general. I did advise him that it's in our state law and we're moving forward and I'm going to ensure that it is as tightly regulated as possible and I have put together a hand-picked committee that includes law enforcement to make recommendations with regard to the promulgation of regulations associated with the sale of recreational marijuana in the state of Nevada.

So we had that conversation and then **finally we talked about internet gaming** and I reminded him that I'm a former chairman of the Nevada Gaming Commission and that I have personally worked on and sponsored a bill that allowed for interstate poker. I personally negotiated a signed an interstate compact Delaware associated with internet poker and those have worked extremely well. I am not aware of [inaudible] any issues associated with underage gaming with regard to internet poker and also people that

have access to those sites that don't live within the borders of Nevada. So if there is any action that is taken, that does not include Nevada, that we do a very good job. We've been better than anybody in the country if not the world when it comes to the regulation of gaming.

Alison Noon: How did the issue of marijuana come up?

Sandoval: I brought it up.

Alison Noon: You brought it up?

Sandoval: Yes.

Alison Noon: Were you looking for answers or some guidance on what they're going to do?

Sandoval: Yes.

Alison Noon: Did you get what you were looking for?

Sandoval: Well, it wasn't a specific conversation. Again, I'm really reticent to speak for the Attorney General of the United States, but I will say that I will continue with my budget and as you know, I have \$60 million in the budget from an extra tax on the sale of recreational marijuana, a 10% tax, and I feel good about including that in my budget.

Michelle Rindels: What kind of responses did you get from him on those statements?

Sandoval: Well, he didn't...I mean it's no secret. He knew [inaudible]. He doesn't like it. He opposes that and he's been very public about that, as am I, but as I said, I'm chief executive of this state, the voters have spoken. It's in our state's statute. Medical is in our constitution and so I have a responsibility to move forward and that's what I'm going to do.

Geoff Dornan: Is it a states rights issue? Did you bring that up?

Sandoval: I didn't, because you're not going to get any closure with regard to that. That's probably an issue that may get litigated one day, but we didn't talk about that.

Sandi Chereb: So you feel comfortable moving forward and is there any fear and hesitation that the feds will come in and crack down?

Sandoval: Well, I wouldn't say fear. I'm afraid of snakes, but I mean there's always a concern, but I'm going to move forward and include it - I feel comfortable about including it in my budget.

Reporter: I think Spicer had indicated there would be greater enforcement. Did Sessions say what that would look like?

Sandoval: He did not.

Reporter: [Inaudible].

Sandi Chereb: So you really don't...it sounds like it was all good meetings, good facetime, making relationships, but we still don't really know where the administration is going on a lot of these things. Safe to say?

Sandoval: Well, it depends on how you define a lot of these things.

Sandi Chereb: Well, the topics that we talked about. There's no clear direction yet from the administration.

Sandoval: I think it's a work in progress, so it was a combination of both things. I mean, one, it's a new administration and I had the opportunity to meet with them members of the cabinet. I had the opportunity to meet with White House staff, who obviously directly advises the President, so I think that's a massive win, to be able to educate on a firsthand basis about specific issues. It's not going to be a one and done. I'm going to continue to have conversations with them. It's an open door policy. As far as they're concerned, I've invited all, not all of them, but most of them, to come out to Nevada and I hope they'll take up that

invitation.

Sandi Chereb: Did Medicaid come up at all?

Sandoval: No. Yeah, and I think they know my position on that and it's no different than what it was before. Certainly there are things that there's ways to improve it, but I'm going to continue to protect those 300,000 lives.

Reporter: How long were these meetings with them?

Sandoval: An hour, hour and a half. It was solid time and I didn't feel rushed at any point. I felt like I was able to say everything that I wanted to say.

Alison Noon: Did somebody ask **how you feel about the new healthcare plan** for individual states to let go of the ACA reforms?

Sandoval: No.

Alison Noon: How do you feel about that?

Sandoval: Well, I mean that's, again, a work in progress, so we'll...I'm not going to comment on it at this time and I don't speculate on anything that really isn't having, I shouldn't say substance — isn't really mature in terms of its development.

Michelle Rindels: On that **sanctuary city** conversation you had, it seems like there...well, I mean Metro would say there's a misunderstanding of what's going on there, was there any indication that Sessions agrees this is a misunderstanding?

Sandoval: No, I think it's just putting them together and when I say them, it may not be the attorney general himself who direction speaks with Joe Lombardo, but certainly there's going to be somebody pretty high up the food chain that is going to be having a conversation with the sheriff and as I said, Sheriff Lombardo is a friend of mine. He's somebody that I've worked with for years. I have complete confidence in what he does. We've had a telephone call with

regard to the 287(g) and what national policy is and I think he does a great job. So I think it's just a matter of maybe there is a misunderstanding, but giving the Sheriff a firsthand opportunity to speak with Justice and explain exactly what they're doing, because they're not doing anything different than they've always done.

Michelle Rindels: Has this conversation with Sheriff Lombardo, do you know if it was before these letters came out?

Sandoval: It was.

Michelle Rindels: Okay. So you've asked him to revisit now that they've sent this letter?

Sandoval: Yes.

Michelle Rindels: Okay.

Alison Noon: **Have you asked HHS to begin a new review of the healthcare plan that's in Congress?**

Mike Willden: You're talking about state HHS?

Alison Noon: Yeah.

Mike Willden: We're constantly reviewing that.

Alison Noon: Okay.

Mike Willden: So it's a daily process, whatever people are saying or writing or talking about it we're analyzing [inaudible] it on a daily basis.

Sandoval: We have to be able to give informed response in terms of what the proposals are. I don't want to give them impression just because I personally am waiting, it doesn't mean that we don't have HHS working on this.

