

San Juan County's elections will be observed by the state of Utah and others

OCTOBER 2, 2018

FOX 13

Ben Winslow

<https://fox13now.com/2018/10/02/san-juan-countys-elections-will-be-observed-by-the-state-of-utah-and-others/>



SALT LAKE CITY — Lt. Governor Spencer Cox's office will have someone in San Juan County on Election Day to observe their elections to ensure there aren't problems. The Lt. Governor announced on Tuesday the Utah State Elections Office would have someone there as the election has come under scrutiny from federal courts, the Navajo Nation and activists.

A federal judge found San Juan County illegally gerrymandered county commission and school boundaries. Native Americans make up the majority population, but

were a political minority. The boundaries were re-drawn and he has ordered new elections this year. (The county is appealing the decision.)

San Juan County has faced numerous lawsuits over its elections. The county has repeatedly insisted it has run fair elections and not discriminated.

State Elections Director Justin Lee said they wanted to ensure there were no problems on Election Day.

"Federal judges, I think, will be watching elections in San Juan County for a while. They have been watching for a while, so it's not the reason," he told reporters. "We received complaints and issues from lots of different parties on both sides of the issue so we prefer to be down there ourselves to see what's going on and get on top of issues if there are some. It's a very emotional and politically charged situation."

Lee said the state has been working with the county and the Navajo Nation Human Rights Commission to ensure voters are properly registered, using geographic information systems to pinpoint where people live and put them in the right precincts.

The American Civil Liberties Union and the U.S. Department of Justice have previously monitored elections in San Juan County. The ACLU of Utah told FOX 13 on Tuesday it would again be watching the 2018 elections, but it's the first time the state has dispatched someone to watch an election. Previously, the state had [monitored Hildale's controversial 2017 election from afar when ex-member of the FLDS Church sought to wrest government control](#) from those loyal to imprisoned polygamist leader Warren Jeffs.