



2025 JUNE INTERIM

June 17-18, 2025

UAC is the advocate for all 29 Utah counties. If you have questions about legislative action, please reach out to the legislative team or visit utahcounties.org.

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| <u>Economic Development and Workforce Services</u> | <p>OLRGC, the Kem C. Gardner Institute, GOEO, the Governor's Office, DWS, and the Utah Housing Corporation all gave updates on the state of housing affordability. Steve Waldrip, Senior Advisor for Housing, Governor's Office, noted that the evidence that Utah knows how to grow well is clear in that we are all here and people keep wanting to move here. Efforts to address market shortages are efforts to ensure that the future of our state can stay in Utah. Waldrip noted that one of the most significant benefits would be an infrastructure fund to jumpstart construction on entitled projects.</p> <p>Committee members asked Waldrip about which agency a clearing-house for housing would fit into. Waldrip noted that DWS, GOEO, and the Governor's Office are working on a proposed solution for structural changes.</p> |
| <u>Government Operations</u> | <p>OLRGC staff presented an overview of the signature gathering and verification process, along with legislation that did and did not pass. The Lt. Governor's office offered suggestions for legislation, including county clerks retaining custody of packets.</p> <p>Sen. McKell asked about objectivity, noting that Utah County had one of the highest verification rates for the flag petitions, and the lowest rates for mail-in ballots. Brian McKenzie notes that training has been developed through the Lt. Governor's office that has been really valuable. He notes that there will always be some verification, since there is a human factor, but that training, audits, and knowing what the standard error rate is will continue to help.</p> |



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| <p><u>Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice</u></p> | <p>Spencer Turley, Deputy Director, Department of Corrections, and Sheriff Ryan Arbon, Weber County, presented an overview of correctional facilities standards. In correctional facilities across the state, standards are enforced by both contracted jails and state facilities, with separate standards for community facilities. Sheriff Tracy Glover, Kane County, presented additional information about how the Utah Sheriff's Association and Kane County work to maintain and enforce standards to improve the quality of care given to inmates.</p> |
| <p><u>Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment</u></p> | <p>Redge Johnson, Director, PLPCO, discussed Class D roads. These roads may have some maintenance, but are largely infrequently maintained. They are deeply important to Utah residents as they access recreational areas. HB103, State Land Access Road Amendments, (T. Shelley) asked PLPCO to work to identify class D roads on state lands. The office is starting with Kane, Garfield, Wayne, San Juan, Emery, Carbon, and Uintah counties. The office will have additional data, GIS analysis tools, legal documentation templates, and a process to file notices with county recorders. The focus is roads that lead to or end on public lands rather than those on private property.</p> |
| <p><u>Senate Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Confirmation Committee</u></p> | <p>Councilmember Chris Robinson was favorably recommended to the seat previously held by Wade Heaton on the Wildlife Board. His nomination was confirmed by the full Senate. Congratulations, Councilmember Robinson!</p> |

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| <p><u>Political Subdivisions</u></p> | <p>Sen. Winterton led discussions on county classifications and county forms of government. Sen. Winterton noted that districts v. at-large, population sizes, staff v. elected officials making decisions, and other questions have prompted the conversation about whether or not the legislature should provide clarity to the statute.</p> <p>Sen. Winterton wants residents to feel that they have someone in their legislative body who represents them. He mentions that time commitments, staff, and costs all must be balanced. Rep. Walter notes that the variety of solutions across the state help to benefit unique situations in counties across the state, so he warns against limiting options. Rep. Dunnigan asks about the ability to distinguish between executive and legislative powers in counties with large populations. Sen. Winterton notes that there are options for solutions that work well in other counties. The committee opened a bill file for Sen. Winterton to continue work on this issue.</p> <p>During a discussion on county classifications, Rep. Walter noted that if we're going to keep using classes, the boundaries will continue to need to be increased as all counties grow. Rep. Peterson and Rep. Dunnigan noted that instead of just increasing the buckets, the legislature should look at why the legislature is disadvantaging counties based on growth, and if there's a better way to do it. The committee did not open a bill file on this issue.</p> |
| <p><u>Transportation</u></p> | <p>Leif Erickson, Government Relations Director, UDOT, presented information on sales tax exemptions for transit purchases. Utah Code exempts all sales to public transit districts, and all sales to subcontractors of a public transit district for tangible personal property installed or converted to real property owned by the district. HB322, Public Transit Capital Development Modifications (K. Christofferson) from the 2022 general session required UDOT to manage and oversee UTA capital projects. UDOT does not have the same sales tax exemptions as UTA, meaning that sales tax for future FrontRunner purchases could lead to \$20 million in sales tax paid by UDOT.</p> <p>WFRC and MAG presented an annual update of the Utah Unified Transportation Plan.</p> |

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| <p><u>Public Utilities, Energy, and Technology</u></p> | <p>Emily Lesofski, Energy Advisor to the Governor and Director, Office of Energy Development, provided an update on nuclear projects across the state. She emphasized that the state’s efforts are intended to build an energy ecosystem across the state that fully supports nuclear efforts.</p> <p>Rebeca Dilg, Director, Utah Broadband Center, provided an update on broadband connectivity efforts and federal grant opportunities. The center has used two grants, Broadband, Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) totaling \$317 million, and the Digital Equity Act (DEA) totaling \$7.8 million. BEAD procedures were drastically revised on June 6, allowing the funds to be used not just for fiber optic, but for any technology that meets speed, latency, reliability, consistency, scalability, and connectivity requirements. DEA funding was pulled on May 9.</p> |
| <p><u>Revenue and Taxation</u></p> | <p>Phil Dean, Chief Economist, Kem C. Gardner Institute, presented an overview of Utah’s tax system and the various tax principles that are considered when legislators set tax policy. Utah’s “three-legged stool” model has helped to create historic stability.</p> |

