

2-25-21

**Senate Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee**

**Bill: 1<sup>st</sup> Substitute HB 297, Colorado River Amendments**

Sponsor: Rep. Wilson

Floor Sponsor: Sen. Anderegg

**UASD Position: Support**

This Bill: addresses Utah's management of Utah's Colorado River system interests.

Discussion: The sponsor said that approximately 60% of Utah's population relies on the Colorado River for drinking water. This bill creates the Colorado River Authority. The sponsor said Utah is behind the times compared to our bordering states that have significant resources and staff for the Colorado River. Utah's River Commissioner said this bill significantly adds to the opportunity of the state to use its allocation of water from the Colorado River Compact. Growth and drought are the biggest factors the states that rely on the Colorado River face. This bill allows resources to be put to the best use possible. Amendment one was added to the bill. Sen. Iwamoto voiced support for this bill and asked for tribal voices to be represented on the Board. The Utah Media Coalition voiced support for the amendment added to this bill. The State Department of Natural Resources and the Utah Farm Bureau voiced support of this bill. The Utah Rivers Council voiced opposition to this bill.

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

N/V: 2

**Outcome: 1<sup>st</sup> Substitute HB 279, as amended, passed out of committee with a favorable recommendation**

**Bill: SCR 3, Concurrent Resolution Encouraging the Evaluation of Interstate Passenger Rail Opportunities**

Sponsor: Sen. Escamilla

Floor Sponsor: Rep. Hollins

## **UASD Position: Tracking**

**This Bill:** This concurrent resolution encourages the evaluation of interstate passenger rail opportunities and the expansion of Utah's rail infrastructure.

**Discussion:** The 1<sup>st</sup> substitute was adopted by the committee. The sponsor said this bill recognizes the benefit of railway investment and the need to evaluate and plan for expanding passenger rail infrastructure. Utah Rail Passengers Association and the Utah Transit Authority voiced support for this bill. Members of the public voiced opposition to this bill. Sen. Hinkins asked why is the state is competing against private companies for transit. Sen. Escamilla said this resolution isn't encouraging public versus private transportation. The resolution encourages the state to have a plan. Sen. Davis voiced support for this bill. Sen. Hinkins voiced opposition to the bill.

Yeas: 2

Nays: 3

N/V: 3

**Outcome: 1<sup>st</sup> Substitute SCR 3 failed to pass out of committee with a favorable recommendation**