

Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee
02/23/2026

Bill: SB 306 - Special Districts Modifications

Sponsor: Senator Cullimore

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Support

This Bill deals with the withdrawal procedure from a first responder district.

Discussion: The sponsor stated that the Bill updates Utah statute to allow a county of the first class to withdraw from a first responder district on the same terms and with the same withdrawal process currently afforded to municipalities.

White City, Kearns, Magna, and Copperton spoke in support of the Bill.

Yeas: 5

Nays: 0

N/V: 2

Outcome: SB 306 passed out of Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: 1st substitute HB 429 - Special Districts Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Pierucci

Floor Sponsor: Senator McCay

UASD Position: Oppose

This Bill addresses withdrawal of a county or a municipality from a special district under certain circumstances.

Discussion: The sponsor stated that the Bill applies only to counties of the first class and specifically targets trash collection service districts. It is narrowly tailored to only impact the Wasatch Front Waste and Recycling District (“WFWCD”). She explained that Herriman City approached her after identifying a way to lower costs for their citizens by privatizing its trash collection service. The City told the sponsor that they could not withdraw from WFWRD and were essentially being held hostage by the District.

The Bill allows cities and a county of the first class to withdraw from a garbage collection district by simply submitting a notice of the intent to withdraw, performing feasibility study conducted within 90 days that would only have to look at the feasibility of the withdrawing entity and not the District. Following the study, the city council could hold a public hearing and vote on whether to withdraw. If approved, the city could submit a formal notice of withdrawal and contract services privately. The sponsor emphasized that the Bill strengthens local control, protects taxpayer dollars, and empowers cities. She acknowledged that language proposed late last week regarding special service districts may not strike the right tone and expressed commitment to continue working on amendments with the District. She also noted the need for a

broader conversation about the role of special service districts, especially in larger counties, when the private sector may provide the same services.

A member of the Holiday City Council, who is the board chair of WFWRD, spoke in opposition to the Bill as drafted. She argued that the Bill goes further than necessary and creates an easy path for cities to leave, while eliminating all protections for the cities that wish to remain with the District. She stated that most cities within WFWRD find the best value within the special service district's shared service model and requested adoption of substitute language developed in coordination with the Utah Association of Special Districts. The substitute language would maintain a workable withdrawal process while requiring appropriate financial and operational analysis to protect both the departing city and remaining communities and ratepayers. She emphasized the importance of balancing the interests of withdrawing entities with the obligation to safeguard communities relying on district services.

The General Manager of WFWRD stated that the organization operates efficiently and cost-effectively, continuously seeking to optimize programs, control costs, and minimize reliance on general funds. He noted that they had met with Herriman to evaluate its withdrawal request and acknowledged prior misunderstandings and disagreements. He said they recently developed a friendly exit strategy intended to satisfy both parties. While not fundamentally opposed to a withdrawal process, he requested the adoption of the amendments proposed by UASD to ensure protections for both withdrawing municipalities and remaining cities and ratepayers.

Senator Brammer asked what specifically they sought to protect for those remaining in the District. The General Manager responded that as municipalities withdraw and the number of properties served declines, economies of scale diminish, potentially increasing costs and creating financial risk for remaining communities. Senator Brammer questioned why all cities should effectively be locked into a "hold harmless" structure for economies of scale when they have already paid capital costs, arguing that competition incentivizes strong customer service and better pricing. The District's attorney addressed the Senator's questions and reviewed the proposed amended language, explaining that it would require the feasibility consultant to consider the impacts on the departing municipality and the District. While not mandating specific outcomes, it would require that any conditions identified in the feasibility study be followed if the withdrawal were to proceed.

Senator Brammer asked whether cities would be forced to follow every recommendation of the feasibility consultant. The attorney responded that typically feasibility conditions must be satisfied to ensure the withdrawal is viable and does not create unworkable consequences. Senator Brammer argued that cities should act in their own best interests and not be obligated to prioritize other municipalities. The attorney clarified that the language merely requires consideration of impacts, not protection mandates, and that the city would retain ultimate decision-making authority. She emphasized that the District would have an opportunity to review the feasibility report before public release to provide input, not control.

Senator Brammer expressed continued concern about requiring cities to follow consultant recommendations. The attorney reiterated that such processes are standard and stated they were open to continued discussions with the sponsor.

The Mayor of Herriman spoke in support of the original Bill, stating it allows the private market to fill opportunities and opposing the proposed amendments. Senator Brammer expressed support for adding a bond-related provision and argued that special service districts must compete effectively. He stated that lawmakers serve citizens rather than government entities and cautioning against protectionism. Senator McCay noted that this is the second Bill addressing exit processes and suggested adding the broader issue of special district governance to the interim study list. He expressed concern that some districts may become less accountable when board members serve through city council appointments rather than direct election.

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

N/V: 1

Outcome: 1st substitute HB 429 passed out of Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: 3rd substitute HB 32 - Signature Gathering and Verification Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Cutler

Floor Sponsor: Senator Winterton

UASD Position: Track

This Bill modifies requirements for petitions

Discussion: The sponsor presented the 3rd substitute, which was adopted by the Committee. The sponsor explained that the Bill amends, standardizes, and makes technical revisions to the signature collector verification form included in petition packets and clarifies how an individual may be compensated for collecting petition signatures. Beginning July 1, 2027, the Bill requires a county clerk who verifies petition signatures to send both an email and text message notification to each signer informing them of the status of their signature.

The Bill also modifies requirements related to statewide initiative and referendum packets by removing the requirement that the county clerk deliver each packet to the Utah Lieutenant Governor's Office, instead requiring the verifying county clerk to certify certain statistical information to the Lieutenant Governor. It further directs the county clerk to retain and preserve each packet for at least 22 months.

Additionally, the Bill designates the existing initiative and referendum packet format as one packet type and creates an alternative packet type with different content and assembly requirements. Under the alternative packet type, access to the full text of a proposed or referable law is provided through a QR code rather than a printed copy, and the initiative petition and each signature sheet must include a brief, plain-language description of the principal provisions of the proposed law. The Bill allows sponsors of an initiative or referendum petition to circulate traditional packets, alternative packets, or both. The Utah Lieutenant Governor's Office spoke in support of the Bill.

Yeas: 4

Nays: 1

N/V: 2

Outcome: 3rd substitute HB 32 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: HB 425 - Local Government Fees Amendments

Sponsor: Representative K. Peterson

Floor Sponsor: Senator Brammer

UASD Position: Track

This Bill modifies and enacts provisions related to municipal and county fees.

Discussion: The sponsor stated that the Bill prohibits a city or town from imposing a fee on the general public for broadband or public safety service, with exceptions. It creates a process for the fee to be adopted, including requiring a study that demonstrates a reasonable relationship between the fee amount and the services or benefits received by those paying the fee and requiring the municipality to make the study publicly available. After the study is complete, a public hearing is required, and the municipality must also establish an appeal process related to the fee. If the fee is adopted, the revenue from the fee is required to be deposited into a restricted account and may only be used for the specified purpose. The fee automatically expires every ten years. If the municipality wishes to continue to require the fee, the entire process must be completed again.

The Utah League of Cities and Towns, the Utah Taxpayers Association, and the Wasatch Front Regional Council spoke in support of the Bill.

Yeas: 3

Nays: 0

N/V: 4

Outcome: HB 325 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.