

House Political Subdivisions Committee

02/25/2026

Bill: 2nd substitute HB 535 - Disposition of Public Property Modifications

Sponsor: Representative Walters

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Track

This Bill deals with the disposition of certain publicly owned real property.

Discussion: The sponsor presented the 2nd substitute, which modifies the notice requirement to provide a 90-day notice period for school districts. The Committee adopted the 2nd substitute. The sponsor explained that the Bill defines “disposition” as the sale, lease, or joint venture of public property and applies the requirements to significant parcels of public property valued at \$500,000 or more. The Bill establishes a process for a local governmental entity to dispose of public property by requiring the entity to post notice of its intent to sell real property on its website or another public listing website for 45 days, announce the proposed disposition in a public meeting, and place a sign on the property. Once a transaction or decision is made, the public body is required to disclose that decision. The sponsor emphasized that the Bill is intended to increase transparency without interfering with the substantive decision-making authority of local governments.

Representative Hansen asked how the process could be made more open or accessible to ordinary citizens. The sponsor responded that the Bill seeks to balance the interests of the public entity and the public by requiring online posting, disclosure in a public meeting, and on-site notice. Representative Miller asked whether a land trade would trigger the process. The sponsor explained that the term “exchange” was intentionally excluded so that value-for-value land trades would not be inadvertently captured by the requirements.

The Utah League of Cities and Towns stated that it was not opposed to the underlying concept of the Bill but expressed concern that the Bill may unintentionally expand administrative authority for local governments and noted that it is working with the sponsor on clarifying language. The Utah Redevelopment Association expressed concern regarding how the Bill differentiates between redevelopment agencies and other local governmental entities.

Yeas: 9

Nays: 0

N/V: 3

Outcome: 2nd substitute HB 535 passed out of Committee with a favorable recommendation

Bill: 2nd substitute HB 363 - Water Easement Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Abbott

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Track

This Bill addresses provisions related to a prescriptive easement for water conveyance.

Discussion: The sponsor presented the 2nd substitute, which was adopted by the Committee. The sponsor explained that the Bill establishes a procedure to govern situations in which a canal company files a notice of abandonment of a prescriptive easement used for water conveyance. The Bill provides that when the holder files a notice of intent to abandon a prescriptive easement for water conveyance, a municipality has first priority to establish control of the easement. The Bill further provides that if a political subdivision seeks to establish control of a prescriptive easement for water conveyance, it must file a notice describing the use and location of the easement with the county recorder in the county where the easement is located. The Bill also allows a political subdivision to convert the use of a prescriptive easement if it mails notice of the converted use to each affected landowner, files a notice describing the converted use with the county recorder, waits 120 days after providing notice, and receives no written objection from an affected landowner.

Representative Hansen asked whether members of the public would receive notice. The sponsor responded that if a political subdivision seeks to establish control of or convert the use of a prescriptive easement, it must provide notice to affected property owners in accordance with the statutory procedure outlined in the Bill. Representative Walter asked whether canal companies could work directly with a municipality by entering into a contract. The sponsor explained that while that is possible, many canal companies are mutual organizations with numerous shareholders, and when abandonment occurs there is often no single entity coordinating discussions, making a formal statutory process necessary. A concern was raised regarding municipalities receiving first priority rather than private property owners. The sponsor acknowledged that the concern is reasonable but stated that the Bill creates a clear pathway for political subdivisions to secure and manage these easement rights. Representative Gwynn asked how the process would operate if a canal runs through multiple jurisdictions. The sponsor responded that the political subdivision with geographic jurisdiction over the relevant portion of the easement would assert control.

The Utah League of Cities and Towns expressed support for the Bill. Heather Anderson, representing the Utah Association of Special Districts, thanked the sponsor for working with the Association and expressed support for the 2nd substitute which allows all political subdivisions, not just municipalities, to establish control of a prescriptive easement for water conveyance.

Yeas: 6

Nays: 1

N/V: 5

Outcome: 2nd substitute HB 363 passed out of Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: HB 544 - County Land Use Authority Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Chevrier

Floor Sponsor:

UASD Position: Track

This Bill requires a county to accept and process a plan review application for a single-family dwelling on a qualifying parcel that is not part of a subdivision.

Discussion:

Yeas:

Nays:

N/V:

Outcome: HB 544 was not heard in the Committee today.

Bill: 1st substitute SB 201 - Shelter Animal Euthanasia Amendments

Sponsor: Senator Grover

Floor Sponsor: Representative Loubet

UASD Position: Track

This Bill deals with the treatment of dogs and cats in an animal shelter.

Discussion: The sponsor stated that the Bill provides that an animal shelter may euthanize an animal only if no reasonable alternatives to euthanasia are available. When a shelter takes in an animal, it may contact rescue organizations or other entities at its discretion, depending on its policies and preferred methods of outreach. The shelter ultimately retains full discretion in determining the appropriate course of action.

Representative Hansen asked whether all shelters in Utah are “kill shelters”. The sponsor explained that shelters classified as “no-kill” typically maintain a 90% save rate, meaning no more than 10% of animals are euthanized for reasons other than severe illness or aggression. In response to a question about how many pets are currently euthanized that could potentially be transferred to rescues, the sponsor indicated that approximately 1,100–1,200 animals would remain statewide before Utah would reach “no-kill” status. This averages roughly two to three animals unnecessarily being euthanized per day. Representative Kohler asked how injuries to an animal factor into the process. The sponsor stated that decisions regarding animals that are extremely sick or severely injured are left to the shelter’s professional judgment. However, if an animal is injured but treatable and the shelter lacks the space or financial resources, the Bill would encourage consideration of alternatives before euthanasia.

The South Utah Valley Animal Shelter expressed concern about unclear expectations and definitions within the Bill. The Salt Lake County Animal Services spoke in support. The Utah Animal Control Officers Association opposed the Bill, citing concerns that it does not adequately address fiscal impacts. The Utah Chiefs of Police Association spoke in opposition.

Representative Kohler asked to hold the Bill.

Yeas: 6

Nays: 2
N/V: 4

Outcome: 1st substitute SB 201 was held in the Committee.

Bill: 1st substitute SB 228 - Community Reinvestment Agency Amendments

Sponsor: Senator Harper

Floor Sponsor: Representative Walter

UASD Position: Track

This Bill modifies requirements for dissolving a community reinvestment agency project area.

Discussion: The sponsor explained that the Bill modifies the statutes governing community reinvestment agencies and tax increment financing by consolidating and clarifying definitions related to tax increment, project areas, taxing entities, and project area budgets. The Bill defines “tax increment” as the difference between the amount of property tax revenue generated in a project area using current assessed value and the amount that would be generated using the base taxable value and excludes certain tax levies from that definition. The Bill clarifies that when the authorized period for collecting tax increment revenue for a project area ends, the remaining tax increment must be distributed to the taxing entities that levied or agreed to the tax increment under the project area plan, project area budget, or interlocal agreement. The Bill amends the provisions governing dissolution of a project area by allowing an agency to extend the dormancy period for up to two years if certain public hearing, resolution, and legislative body approval requirements are met, and sets procedures for dissolving a project area early. The Bill also establishes reporting requirements for local entities that receive tax increment revenue, requiring them to annually submit detailed information about assessed value changes, tax increment revenue receipts and expenditures, project area development, and other specified data to the Governor’s Office of Economic Opportunity for inclusion in a publicly accessible database. The Bill provides that failure to comply with the reporting requirements may result in referral to the State Auditor and withholding of a portion of tax increment revenue.

The Utah League of Cities and Towns spoke in support of the Bill. The Utah Redevelopment Association spoke in opposition.

Yeas: 8
Nays: 1
N/V: 3

Outcome: 1st substitute SB 228 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.