

House Economic Development and Workforce Services Committee

2/28/2025

Bill: SB 280 – Retail Facility Amendments

Sponsor: Senator Evan J. Vickers

Floor Sponsor: Representative Neil R. Walter

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill modifies provisions related to retail facility incentive payments.

Discussion: Senator Vickers presented SB 280, explaining that in 2021, there was significant competition among big-box and smaller retail stores. In response, legislation was passed in 2022 to help incentivize retail competition, which he believed had been effective. SB 280 serves as a clarification of that previous legislation while maintaining its intent.

This Bill clarifies that the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity is prohibited from offering retail facility incentive payments. However, it allows public entities to provide such payments for retail facilities within a mixed-use development, as long as the development includes housing units within a quarter mile. This change enables developers to collaborate on projects while still qualifying for incentives. The Bill also refines the reporting requirements, making it clear that communities are responsible for reporting compliance. To ensure a streamlined process, a “safe harbor” provision states that if a city does not receive a response from the community within six months, compliance will be assumed.

During the discussion, Representative Shelley asked whether the Bill oversteps a city’s decision-making power. The sponsor clarified that the legislation sets guidelines for cities but does not restrict them from making their own decisions. In fact, the Bill relaxes certain parameters from the previous legislation by allowing housing developments to be nearby rather than requiring them to be contiguous. The Utah League of Cities and Towns and the Utah Retail Merchants Association spoke in support of the Bill, with the latter highlighting improvements in regulatory clarity. Representative Shelley expressed a desire to consult with local mayors before proceeding. The sponsor reassured that cities and communities are never required to use incentives to attract retail but that this Bill simply establishes guidelines for those that choose to do so.

Yeas: 4

Nays: 1

N/V: 5

Outcome: SB 280 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: SB 254 – State Grant Revisions

Sponsor: Senator Luz Escamilla

Floor Sponsor: Representative Melissa G. Ballard

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill modifies provisions related to state grants.

Discussion: Senator Escamilla presented SB 254, explaining that last year, grants and appropriated funds underwent a revamp. This Bill builds on that effort by establishing requirements for direct appropriations, ensuring that when funds are awarded outside the standard procurement process, they include a disbursement schedule, deliverables, reporting requirements, and performance metrics. This added framework enhances transparency and accountability. There was no public comment.

Yeas: 5

Nays: 0

N/V: 5

Outcome: SB 254 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.