

# **UTAH**

*Legislative Session:* 2014 General Session

*Title of Legislation:* House Bill 388

*Sponsors of Legislation*

- Chief Sponsor: Representative Johnny Anderson (R-District 34)
- Substitute Sponsor: Senator Jerry W. Stevenson (R-District 21)
- Co-Sponsor: Representative J. Briscoe (D)

*Bill Summary*

House Bill 388—“Amendments to Transportation Funding” legislation—would have permitted local government elections to increase the sales tax by a quarter-cent per each \$1 purchase to support mass transit funding. If local elections successfully passed this type of funding measure, by 2016, the local governments could potentially raise \$91.5 million annually.

*Bill Status*

This bill died on March 13, 2014. Debate was expected to begin on this legislation after Senator Stevenson asked for a motion to open discussion on March 13. However, many lawmakers refused to open the debate for the bill, and unexpectedly, the bill immediately died because the legislative session officially ended at midnight. Many bills, including HB 388, never received a vote.

On March 7, the House had previously passed the bill with a vote of 58 to 10. The Transportation Committee also provided a favorable recommendation of HB 388 on February 26, with a vote of 9-1-1.

*Why Did The Bill Fail?*

Although this bill passed overwhelmingly in the House, the bill died in the Senate. This bill largely failed when several senators believed that this bill was essentially an “election-year tax increase.” Senator Stevenson said that “a lot of senators viewed it as a tax increase... our caucus had taken an early position that we didn’t want to pass out any tax increases this year. It’s an election year.”<sup>1</sup>

Representative Anderson also echoed Senator Stevenson’s sentiment when he said this bill “wasn’t increasing any taxes at all...it would authorize local communities to put it to a vote. We as legislators cap taxes. This would let us get out of the way to let voters decide if this was something they want.”<sup>2</sup>

Representative Anderson—the main sponsor of the bill and the current Chairman of the House Transportation Interim Committee— said that he may pursue this legislation again when the legislature returns next year. He may also look into other ways to increase funding opportunities for mass-transit in Utah.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.sltrib.com/csp/cms/sites/sltrib/pages/printerfriendly.csp?id=57683260>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.sltrib.com/csp/cms/sites/sltrib/pages/printerfriendly.csp?id=57683260>

### *Proponents of Legislation*

This bill received widespread support from the Chambers of Commerce, environmental clean air groups, local government officials, and regional planners. This support was, in part, garnered by “producing studies on needs, news conferences and publicity.”<sup>3</sup>

These organizations testified in support of the bill at a House Transportation committee hearing:

- Bill Applegarth, Riverton City Mayor
- Rep. Joel Briscoe, Utah State Legislature
- Justin Jones, Salt Lake Chamber
- Bob Bonar, General Manager Snowbird Resort
- Jeremy Keele, Salt Lake County
- Andrew Gruber, Wasatch Front Regional Council
- Phil Sarnoff, Bike Utah
- Heather Anderson, Utah Association of Special Districts
- Bryce Bird, Department of Environmental Quality, Director, Division of Air Quality
- Carl Ingwell, Utah Clean Air Alliance
- Steve Erickson, Crossroads Urban Center
- Erin Mendenhall, Breathe Utah
- Mike Allegra, General Manager, Utah Transit Authority

### *Opponents of Legislation*

- George Chapman, Citizen
- Royce Van Tassell, Utah Taxpayers Association

*Bill Text:* <http://le.utah.gov/~2014/bills/static/HB0388.html>

### *References*

<http://le.utah.gov/~2014/minutes/HTRA0226.pdf>

<http://www.sltrib.com/csp/cms/sites/sltrib/pages/printerfriendly.csp?id=57683260>

ARTBA Contact: Rebecca Schwartz, (202) 289-4434, [rschwartz@artba.org](mailto:rschwartz@artba.org)

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<sup>3</sup> Davidson, Lee. *The Salt Lake Tribune*. 14 March 2014. <http://www.sltrib.com/csp/cms/sites/sltrib/pages/printerfriendly.csp?id=57683260>