

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION FOR AN ECONOMIC STUDY  
OF THE DEPLOYMENT OF STATE RESOURCES IN  
UNDERPERFORMING COMMUNITIES**

2020 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Phil Lyman**

Senate Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This resolution requests a study and report on recommendations for more effective deployment of state resources to better serve Utah's economically underperforming communities.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This resolution:

- ▶ recognizes the strength of Utah's economy;
- ▶ recognizes that, despite Utah's strong economy, some communities are struggling;
- ▶ recognizes the state's resources as a driver for greater prosperity;
- ▶ expresses support for a study that will analyze how state resources are being used to help communities with economic performance below the state average; and
- ▶ expresses support for creating a framework to measure a community's economic performance in relation to other communities in the state.

**Special Clauses:**

None

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*Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

WHEREAS, the state of Utah has one of the fastest growing economies in the country,



with a 3.3% annual growth rate since 2007 and a 4.2% growth rate over the past year;

WHEREAS, despite strong economic growth overall, some Utah communities are still struggling;

WHEREAS, employment has increased by 31% overall since 2009, the largest change in employment of any state, but about a third of Utah counties have not yet returned to their pre-recession employment level;

WHEREAS, Utah's unemployment rate of 2.3% is the lowest in the nation, but there are still counties within the state with unemployment rates more than double the statewide rate;

WHEREAS, Utah's designation of federal opportunity zones created vast rural areas more notable for their exclusion from rather than their inclusion in the opportunity zone program;

WHEREAS, regardless of the methods used to identify opportunity zones, many communities, especially rural communities, that could have benefitted from designation were overlooked, while other areas had thousands of square miles of public land or other undevelopable parcels designated as opportunity zones;

WHEREAS, the opportunity zone program could have been used to help these overlooked communities without diminishing the benefit to opportunity zones that were designated with precision and care;

WHEREAS, based on the stated objectives of the opportunity zone program, it is a disservice that the communities left out of the opportunity zone process are among the most deserving;

WHEREAS, the missed opportunity represented by Utah's opportunity zones is one of many indicators of a possible disconnect between key decision makers and smaller, more rural communities that could make meaningful contributions to Utah's economy if those communities were given genuine consideration;

WHEREAS, many small counties lack the staff and resources to effectively engage with state agencies for the type of planning that drives the deployment of state resources;

WHEREAS, achieving economic prosperity for all of Utah's communities requires a more targeted distribution of the state's resources, with an emphasis on underperforming communities;

WHEREAS, a more focused use of state resources to aid underperforming communities

will lead to greater economic prosperity for all of Utah;

WHEREAS, good information drives better decisions;

WHEREAS, data related to population, voting, health care, K-12 education, higher education, land use, construction, transportation, energy, tourism, the arts, jails, social services, agriculture, natural resources, and economic development incentives, are critical for planning, achieving, and maintaining strong economic growth; and

WHEREAS, the state does have the expertise, data, and desire to exercise governance that is in the best interest of all Utahns:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature, the Governor concurring therein, supports the goal of bringing economic prosperity to all of Utah's communities, especially communities with economic performance below the state average.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor support studying the current distribution of the state's resources in relation to underperforming communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study described in this resolution focus on analyzing the current distribution of all state resources, providing recommendations on the development of a meaningful measure of a community's economic performance in relation to other communities in the state, and assessing how to more effectively use state resources to assist communities with economic performance below the state average.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the study described in this resolution be prepared for additional discussion and review during the Legislature's 2020 Legislative Policy Summit.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the findings and recommendations of the study described in this resolution be reported to the Government Operations Interim Committee no later than November 1, 2020.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the state will revisit opportunity zone designations and work with Utah's federal delegation to amend the state's opportunity zone designations to include overlooked communities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor, in an effort to show care for communities and people with unmet needs and lack of representation in the state's planning processes, will take a proactive approach to deploying the state's resources with a strong emphasis on economically underperforming communities, including requiring the additional allocation of resources to those communities.