

Heading into the last week of the Utah Legislative session, legislative leaders are fast tracking [Senate Bill 337](#) “Land Use and Development Amendments” which if passed, could fund every bad project you can think of, at a pace of 3 per year, without local approval and with a very limited public process and analysis.

SB 337 creates a body called the “Economic Opportunity Coordinating Council” which will dictate what basic direction it wants Utah's economy to take, what sectors it wants Utah's tax revenue to fund, what technology a given sector will adopt, what firms will be chosen to build out that technology, and where the build outs will be sited. With a map and the stroke of a magic marker, the new Chief Executive Officer can proclaim which geographic zones will be spared and which will be covered with asphalt and cement. This is obviously contrary to any notion of ‘free market economy’.

The bill also creates the “Beehive Development Agency” as the tool to fund the chosen projects with the authority to steamroll counties and municipalities, overriding their land use and their taxing authority, and taking from them any right to oppose what the new Authority has decided to do in and to their communities.

SB 337 continues a pattern of the legislature creating financial authorities to subsidize and fast track development. The first of these agencies to be created was the [Military Installation Development Authority \(MIDA\)](#) in 2007, followed by the [Utah Inland Port Authority \(UIPA\)](#) and the [Point of the Mountain Authority](#) in 2018, followed by creation of [Public Infrastructure Districts \(PID\)](#) in 2021, and the [Utah Fairpark Area Investment and Restoration District](#). A recently released [report](#) shows UIPA projecting taxpayer subsidies of over \$1.3 billion for the 12 UIPA project areas throughout the state.

One hundred and thirty-eight PIDs have been created throughout Utah in 4 years since the law was passed. What is the cumulative cost of this development to taxpayers? A comprehensive audit of all the authorities should be conducted before any more are created. This bill should be sent to interim for further discussion.

SB 337 would add the “Beehive Development Agency” into this mix and the agency could operate at an enormous scale.

Projects of the consequence described in the bill should not be given the green light without local approval.