

**MINUTES OF THE
SENATE COMMITTEE ON GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Eighty-first Session
March 24, 2021**

The Senate Committee on Growth and Infrastructure was called to order by Chair Dallas Harris at 3:35 p.m. on Wednesday, March 24, 2021, Online. [Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda. All exhibits are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Senator Chris Brooks, Vice Chair
Senator Pat Spearman
Senator Scott Hammond
Senator Keith F. Pickard

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

Senator Dallas Harris, Chair (Excused)

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:

Susan Scholley, Policy Analyst
Debbie Shope, Committee Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT:

Maria Wortman-Meshberger, Chief, Employment and Support Services, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Department of Health and Human Services

VICE CHAIR BROOKS:

We will open the hearing on Assembly Bill (A.B.) 26.

ASSEMBLY BILL 26: Revises provisions governing programs of energy assistance. (BDR 58-298)

MARIA WORTMAN-MESHBERGER (Chief, Employment and Support Services, Division of Welfare and Supportive Services, Department of Health and Human Services):

I am presenting A.B. 26 which is a housekeeping item revising provisions governing programs in energy assistance. The Energy Assistance Program (EAP) provides a supplement to assist qualifying low-income Nevadans with the cost of home energy. Nevada's EAP has two funding sources. The Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program federal block grant and State revenue generated from Nevada's Universal Energy Charge (UEC) which you may see as a tax on the back of your power bill.

The EAP year begins July 1 and applications are accepted through June 30 the following year. Applications are evaluated year-round or until funding is exhausted. Eligible households receive an annual benefit one time per year, customarily paid to their energy provider or providers. Language in *Nevada Revised Statutes* (NRS) 702.275 is vague regarding the UEC-specified reporting dates of funds received, allocations and distributions. This causes conflicts and confusion as these reports are utilized to distribute any remaining UEC funds.

The proposed changes were recommended by the Legislative Counsel Bureau to clarify and specify the dates listed in NRS. This ensures the UEC funds are distributed as intended in the *Nevada Administrative Code* and removes any room for interpretation of previous language.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

This is straightforward, but I am a novice to this. Lawyers tend to know how a language adjustment changes everything. Getting rid of the word "during" and using "on or before June 30," provides enough clarification? The funds not spent between that time and December 31, you think people will understand this, and that portion is still part of the language in NRS? If those are unspent before December 31, then the monies can be spent on something else?

MS. WORTMAN-MESHBERGER:

The language clarification will be sufficient. Any funds received on or before June 30 need to be spent by the end of December; otherwise, those funds, or a portion thereof, can be distributed to the Housing Division.

SENATOR HAMMOND:

I was wrong in my interpretation of this bill, and you have clarified this for me.

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VICE CHAIR BROOKS:

We will close the hearing on A.B. 26.

I will entertain a motion to introduce Bill Draft Request (BDR) 22-836.

BILL DRAFT REQUEST 22-836: Revises provisions relating to public transit systems. (Later introduced as [Senate Bill 362](#).)

SENATOR SPEARMAN MOVED TO INTRODUCE BDR 22-836.

SENATOR HAMMOND SECONDED THE MOTION.

SENATOR PICKARD:

I am trying to understand what this bill is accomplishing. Is it to provide microtransit services?

VICE CHAIR BROOKS:

The population count in southern Nevada did not allow microtransit services to be provided, but these services exist in other counties.

THE MOTION CARRIED. (SENATOR HARRIS WAS EXCUSED FOR THE VOTE.)

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VICE CHAIR BROOKS:

Seeing no further business to come before the Committee, the meeting is adjourned at 3:46 p.m.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Debbie Shope,
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

Senator Chris Brooks, Vice Chair

DATE: _____

EXHIBIT SUMMARY				
Bill	Exhibit Letter	Begins on Page	Witness / Entity	Description
	A	1		Agenda