County Classification

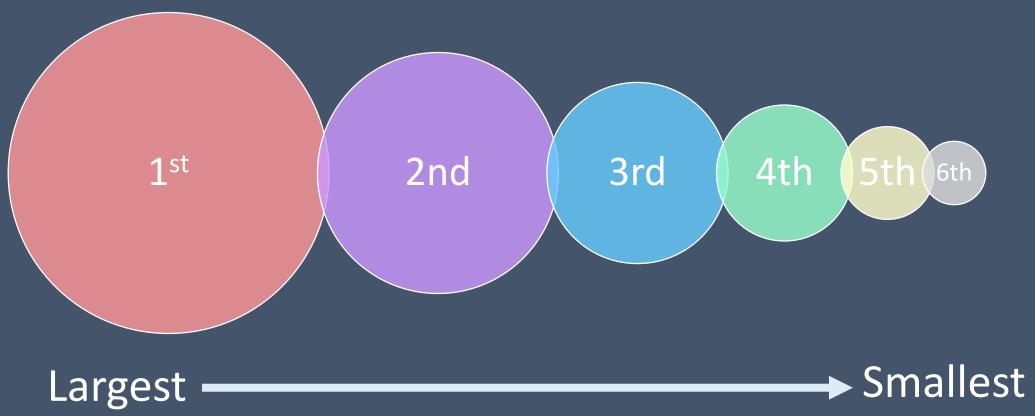Political Subdivisions Interim Committee – June 2018

County Classification

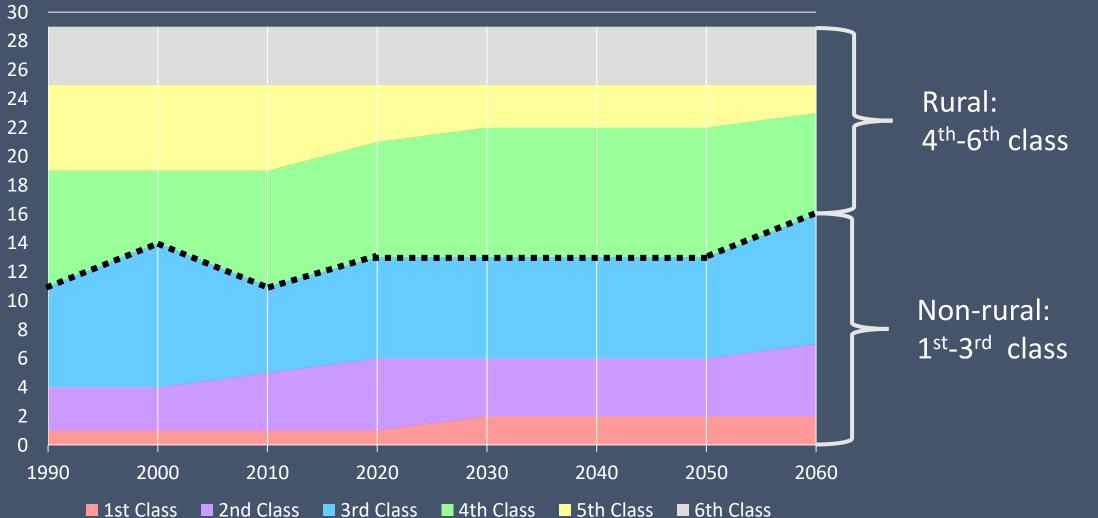1st   2nd   3rd   4th   5th   6th

Largest   ⟶   Smallest

Legislative History

County Classification	Assessed Valuation		Population	
	1953	**1985**	**1987**	**2004**
1st Class	$150 million +	$750 million +	700k +	700k +
2nd Class	$35 - $150 million	$175 - $750 million	125k - 700k	125k - 700k
3rd Class	$20 - $35 million	$100 - $175 million	18k - 125k	31k - 125k
4th Class	$10 - $20 million	$50 - $100 million	10k - 18k	11k - 31k
5th Class	$5 - $10 million	$25 - $50 million	3.5k - 10k	4k - 11k
6th Class	< $5 million	< $25 million	< 3.5k	< 4k

Population History and Projections
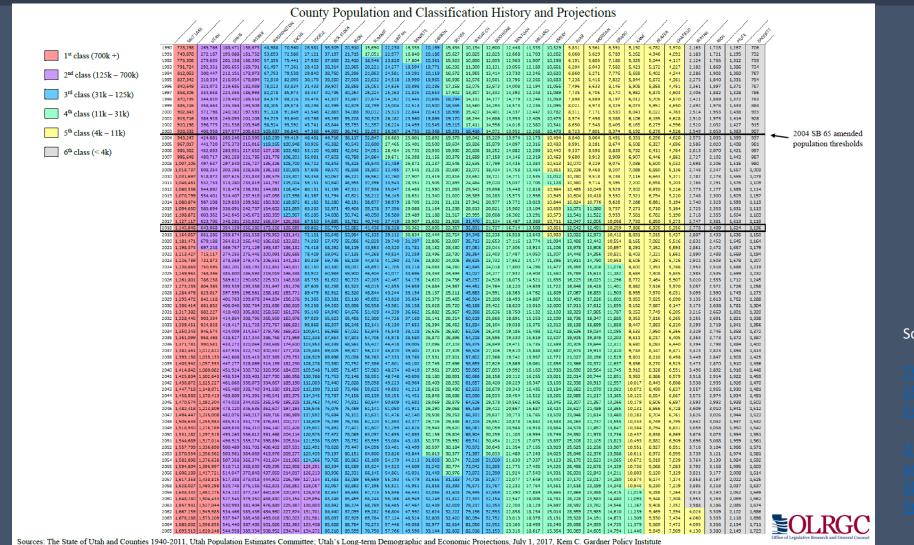
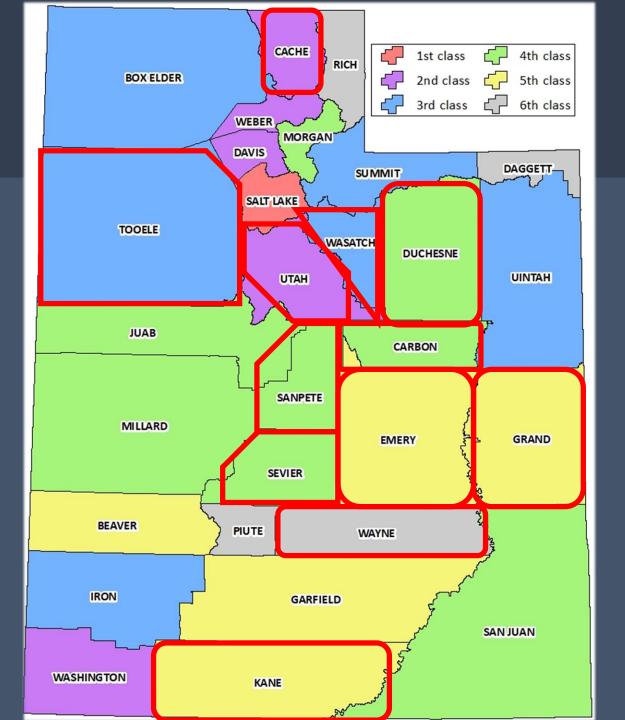County Population and Classification History and Projections

Sources: The State of Utah and Counties 1940-2011, Utah Population Estimates Committee; Utah's Long-term Demographic and Economic Projections, July 1, 2017, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute

Sources:

The State of Utah and Counties 1940-2011, Utah Population Estimates Committee

Utah's Long-term Demographic and Economic Projections, July 1, 2017, Kem C. Gardner Policy Institute

Counties Headed for Change

	Rural/Non-Rural Change	Other Class Change
2017	Wasatch – 4th to 3rd class	Cache – 3rd to 2nd class
2020	Sanpete – 4th to 3rd class	Emery – 5th to 4th class
2022		Utah – 2nd to 1st class
2024		Grand – 5th to 4th class
2053	Carbon – 4th to 3rd class	
	Duchesne – 4th to 3rd class	
2055		Tooele – 3rd to 2nd class
2057	Sevier – 4th to 3rd class	
2059		Kane – 5th to 4th class
2062		Wayne – 6th to 5th class

Other States' Classifications

OLRGC

- Survey of 13 states

- 4 states appear to not classify

- Purpose of classification
  - Commonly to establish county officer salaries
  - Additional purpose in Colorado to set county fees

- Classifications are generally based on population

Legal Considerations

- Constitutional provisions
  - Uniform operation of laws *(Utah Const. Art. 1, Sec. 24)* and equal protection *(U.S. Const. 14th Am.)*
  - Special legislation*(Utah Const. Art. VI, Sec. 26)*

- Guiding case law (non-binding)
  - Reasonable relation to the purpose of the statute
  - Must include or segregate a substantial class (substantial difference in population)
  - Must apply if and when threshold is attained (without legislation)
  - Ability to outgrow and grow into a class

- Questions to keep in mind
  - Do the differences in population afford a rational basis for discriminating between groups of the same natural class?
  - Do the population figures, adopted as the basis of classification, have a reasonable relation to the subject and purpose of the statute?

Policy Considerations

OLRGC

- **What is the purpose of classifying counties?**
  - Method to apply different statutory standards to counties based on population.

- **Is there reason to adjust how counties are classified?**
  - Change population thresholds?
  - Use percentage of population rather than raw numbers?
  - Change the number of classifications?
    - Broaden thresholds to generally distinguish between large/medium/small counties or rural/non-rural counties?

County Classification

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