

## UTAH BILLBOARD STATUTES TALKING POINTS

*October 24, 2024*

1. An overwhelming majority of Utah residents dislike billboards—as numerous polls and repeated expressions of public opinion have shown for many years. Because of this, most Utah cities and towns ban new billboards.
2. Even though cities prohibit **new** billboards, existing billboards remain in place as non-conforming (or ‘grandfathered’) uses. [A grandfathered/nonconforming use is a land use or structure that was legal when established but does not conform to current zoning ordinances.]
3. City and state laws do not allow non-conforming uses or structures to relocate, modify, or upgrade unless such changes are allowed in the city’s zoning ordinances—EXCEPT BILLBOARDS, which are treated differently from all other uses.
4. To ensure they keep their full inventory of existing billboards, and to continue being profitable, billboard companies in Utah:
  - Donate generously to elected leaders and campaign funds. In the 2024 election cycle alone, billboard companies have made more than \$200,000 in campaign contributions.
  - Use campaign donations to influence lawmakers to enact statutes that give unique benefits to owners of nonconforming billboards.
5. Utah’s outdoor advertising laws are more billboard-friendly than any of our surrounding states. Our billboard laws have been modified over the course of many years, through relentless industry lobbying, to allow the following:
  - i. Non-conforming billboards can be modified or upgraded.
  - ii. Non-conforming billboards can be moved to a new location within a mile of the old one.
  - iii. Pre-emption of city zoning regulations, which strips of the authority to regulate billboards to reflect their standards and community wishes.
  - iv. Non-compliance with federal laws that require ‘effective control of outdoor advertising.’
6. Billboard companies are using their influence at the Utah Legislature to override the will of the people and allow billboards on streets and highways where they are destroying property values, community character, and viewsheds—and where they are unwanted by residents, visitors, businesses, and local governments.
7. It’s time for the Utah Legislature to normalize outdoor advertising laws, give sign-and-billboard control back to local governments, and stop allowing outdoor advertising to visually pollute our communities and roadways. The special treatment Utah billboard owners have enjoyed for more than a half-century needs to end.