

HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR

WESTON WAMP

For Immediate Release

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Statewide Tax Law Change Proposed by Hamilton County Passes State Legislature

Sponsored by Sen. Bo Watson, Cities and Counties Will Now Both Be Required to Sign Off on Tax Abatements

HAMILTON COUNTY, TN (April 13, 2026) — Legislation requested by Hamilton County officials to correct a flaw in Tennessee’s current tax law, which allowed a city to forgive county tax dollars, passed both chambers of the Tennessee General Assembly this week.

This issue came to light when county officials discovered housing-related tax deals were reducing county property taxes without commission approval or notice. In response, the county took action to pass a resolution requesting collaboration and began working with State Senator Bo Watson to change state law.

“It only makes sense that if a deal affects Hamilton County taxpayers, the county’s elected officials should be involved,” said Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp. “I want to thank Sen. Bo Watson for his swift leadership, again demonstrating his ability to deliver results for local taxpayers.”

Sen. Watson sponsored legislation—Senate Bill 1398 and House Bill 890—ensuring local governments have a voice in decisions affecting their tax base. The reform requires proper notice and creates a clear process for approval or disapproval of Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreements by the local legislative body—or allows the agreement to proceed if the county mayor raises no objection—when expected tax revenues would be reduced.

“Hamilton County identified some issues with the validity of the law, and we worked together to resolve it,” said State Senator Bo Watson. “This reform gives local governments a clear role in decisions affecting their tax base and ensures a more transparent and accountable process when tax decisions impact multiple jurisdictions.”

The legislation now heads to Governor Bill Lee’s desk for signature.

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