



City of Needles, California Request for City Council Action

☒ CITY COUNCIL ☐ NPUA

☒ Regular ☐ Special

Meeting Date: August 11, 2026

Title: Resolution 2026-35 Authorizing the Submission of a Petition to the United States Department of Transportation Requesting a Time Zone Boundary Change for the City of Needles

Background: In June 2022, the City Council directed staff to research the City's ability to change from the Pacific Time Zone to the Mountain Time Zone. Staff determined that any change to a federal time zone boundary falls under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) pursuant to the Uniform Time Act and cannot be implemented solely through local action.

In September 2023, the City Council considered additional information regarding timekeeping and approved a letter supporting year-round Daylight-Saving Time as part of the broader discussion regarding the City's unique geographic location and regional relationships.

Since that time, federal discussions regarding daylight saving time have continued. H.R. 139, the Sunshine Protection Act of 2025, passed the U.S. House of Representatives on July 14, 2026, by a 308–117 vote. On July 15, 2026, the Senate received the bill, read it twice, and referred it to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation. The bill has not become law.

If enacted in its House-passed form, H.R. 139 would repeal section 3 of the Uniform Time Act and advance each federal standard time zone by one hour on a permanent basis. California's Pacific time would become UTC–7 year-round. Arizona's current Mountain Standard Time is also UTC–7, and the bill would permit jurisdictions that were already exempt from daylight saving time immediately before enactment to retain their pre-enactment standard. If Arizona retained its present offset, Needles and most of Arizona would display the same clock time throughout the year without a time-zone boundary change. Staff should therefore monitor any amendments to the bill's grandfather clause, effective date, and state-election provisions.

Staff has also researched communities that have successfully completed the federal time zone petition process. In 1999, West Wendover, Nevada, successfully petitioned USDOT to move from the Pacific Time Zone to the Mountain Time Zone. West Wendover first made a prima facie showing that the proposed change could satisfy the federal "convenience of commerce" standard. It demonstrated geographic isolation from other Nevada communities and extensive economic and social integration with neighboring Utah, including reliance on Utah for supplies, media, transportation, tourism, healthcare, education, shopping, recreation, and other services. It also documented historical use of Mountain Time and confusion caused by observing Pacific Time.

After finding a sufficient preliminary showing, USDOT published a proposed rule, accepted public comments for approximately 60 days, and held a public hearing in West Wendover. USDOT then determined from the full record that the boundary change would serve the convenience of commerce and redrew the boundary around the City's municipal limits. West Wendover demonstrates that a successful petition requires both a threshold showing sufficient to initiate rulemaking and a fact-intensive final record addressing commercial relationships, transportation connections, media sources, workforce and economic conditions, regional-service use, historical practices, and community support.

Based on this research, staff recommends preparing and submitting a petition to the U.S. Department of Transportation requesting a change to the time zone boundary affecting the City of Needles. The petition should establish that the proposed change serves the "**convenience of commerce**" and should include evidence concerning Needles' geographic and regional orientation; commercial and economic ties to Arizona; transportation corridors and airport use; media markets; workforce and commuting patterns; healthcare,

education, shopping, recreation, and other public-service use; tourism; historical timekeeping practices; existing confusion or inefficiencies; and community support. Staff should also seek supporting information and letters from local businesses, chambers of commerce, neighboring Arizona communities, San Bernardino County, and other regional partners.

Approval of the proposed resolution does **not** change the City's time zone or independently authorize the City to stop changing its clocks. Rather, it authorizes staff to prepare and submit a petition for federal consideration. The U.S. Department of Transportation has exclusive authority to change the federal time-zone boundary. If USDOT finds the initial submission sufficient, the process may include a notice of proposed rulemaking, an approximately 60-day public-comment period, a local public hearing, and a final decision based on the complete record. Any approved change ordinarily becomes effective at a daylight-saving-time transition.

A move into the Mountain Time Zone, standing alone, would not guarantee year-round alignment with Arizona because California generally observes daylight saving time while most of Arizona does not. If H.R. 139 does not become law in a form that achieves Needles' objective, year-round alignment would likely require both a USDOT boundary change and California legislation exempting the affected California Mountain Time area from daylight saving time.

Fiscal Impact: There is no immediate fiscal impact associated with the proposed action. Staff will utilize existing resources to prepare the petition and supporting documentation. Should additional resources or consultant services become necessary, those requests will be presented to the City Council for future consideration.

Recommendation: Adopt Resolution No. 2026-35 authorizing the City Manager to prepare and submit a petition to the United States Department of Transportation requesting a change to the time zone boundary affecting the City of Needles and to take all administrative actions necessary to facilitate the federal petition process.

Submitted By: Patrick Martinez, City Manager

City Management Review: Patrick J Martinez Date: 8/7/2026
Other Department Approval (when required): _____ Date: _____