

State Water Policy Amendments
2025 GENERAL SESSION
STATE OF UTAH
Chief Sponsor: Carl R. Albrecht

LONG TITLE

Committee Note:

The Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee recommended this bill.

Legislative Vote: 12 voting for 2 voting against 5 absent

General Description:

This bill amends the state water policy.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- addresses water quality in groundwater;
- removes language related to balancing certain values or needs in water policy;
- encourages monitoring of watersheds;
- promotes state water planning;
- accounts for regionally appropriate water reuse; and
- makes technical changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

73-1-21, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 37

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **73-1-21** is amended to read:

73-1-21 . State water policy.

(1) It is the policy of the state that:

- (a) Utah shall pursue adequate, reliable, affordable, sustainable, and clean water resources, recognizing that Utah is one of the most arid states in the nation and as

- 32 such, there is, and will continue to be, a need to ensure Utah's finite water resources
33 are used beneficially;
- 34 (b) Utah will promote:
- 35 (i) water conservation, efficiency, and the optimal use of water resources, while
36 identifying intended and unintended consequences to ensure appropriate choice
37 and implementation of particular strategies;
- 38 (ii) water resource development and the creation of new water infrastructure
39 necessary to meet the state's growing demand and promote economic development;
- 40 (iii) compliance with state statutes regarding Lake Powell pipeline development and
41 Bear River development;
- 42 (iv) the timely replacement of aging or inefficient water resource, drinking water,
43 wastewater, and storm water infrastructure;
- 44 (v) the optimal use of agricultural water to sustain and improve food production and
45 the productive capacity of agricultural lands;
- 46 (vi) water quality in rivers~~[-and]~~, lakes, and groundwater that:
- 47 (A) complies with state clean water and safe drinking water statutes; and
48 (B) protects public health;
- 49 (vii) water pricing and funding mechanisms that:
- 50 (A) provide revenue stability while encouraging conservation, efficiency, and
51 optimization efforts; and
- 52 (B) adequately cover infrastructure needs;~~[-and]~~
- 53 ~~[(C) balance social, economic, public interest, and environmental values;]~~
- 54 (viii) respect for water rights;
- 55 (ix) standards for accurate water use measurement, telemetry, tracking, enforcement,
56 and reporting;
- 57 (x) efforts to educate and engage the public in:
- 58 (A) individual actions that protect water quality, including preventing and
59 mitigating water pollution; and
- 60 (B) conservation practices and the efficient and optimal use of water resources;
- 61 (xi) the implementation of cyber security and physical security measures for water
62 infrastructure;
- 63 (xii) the study and consideration of mechanisms for increased flexibility in water use
64 such as water banking and split season uses;
- 65 (xiii) the monitoring of activities in watersheds that provide water to drinking water

66 systems to protect the watersheds;

67 [~~(xiii)~~] (xiv) continued improvements in the management of water resources through

68 protection, restoration, and science-based evaluation of Utah watersheds,

69 increased reservoir capacity, and aquifer recharge or aquifer storage and recovery;

70 [~~(xiv)~~] (xv) the development and beneficial use of Utah's allocated share of interstate

71 rivers, including Utah's allocations under the 1922 and 1948 Colorado River

72 Compacts and the 1980 Amended Bear River Compact;

73 [~~(xv)~~] (xvi) the study and development of strategies and practices necessary to address

74 declining water levels and protect the water quality and quantity of the Great Salt

75 Lake, Utah Lake, and Bear Lake, taking into consideration natural climate change,

76 natural weather systems and patterns, and normal cyclic water level change over

77 time~~[, while balancing economic, social, and environmental needs];~~

78 [~~(xvi)~~] (xvii) regulations and practices, including voluntary practices, that maintain

79 sufficient stream flows and lake levels to provide reasonable access to recreational

80 activities and protect and restore water quality, quantity, and healthy ecosystems,

81 including protecting groundwater and surface water sources from pollution;

82 [~~(xvii)~~] (xviii) equitable access to safe, affordable, and reliable drinking water to

83 protect public health;

84 [~~(xviii)~~] (xix) regulations and practices that encourage effective treatment of

85 wastewater to maximize its availability for beneficial use and minimize depletion

86 and the further degradation of other waters;

87 [~~(xix)~~] (xx) the control of invasive species that threaten or degrade waters of the state;

88 [~~(xx)~~] (xxi) coordination among the state, water providers, water users, local

89 governments, government agencies, and researchers in the study of ways weather

90 and climate will impact future water supplies, demand, and quality;

91 (xxii) state water planning, including the formation of the state water plan as

92 provided in Section 73-10-15;

93 (xxiii) water reuse with appropriate conditions for the region in which the water reuse

94 occurs;

95 [~~(xxi)~~] (xxiv) water laws, rules, and enforcement that are consistent with this

96 Subsection (1) and encourage transparency, order, and certainty in the use of

97 public water;

98 [~~(xxii)~~] (xxv) the support and funding of research, science, and technology necessary

99 to achieve the provisions of this Subsection (1); and

100 [~~xxiii~~] (xxvi) the collaboration, cooperation, and engagement of stakeholders in the
101 identification and advancement of actions that support the provisions of this
102 Subsection (1); and

103 (c) Utah supports the timely and appropriate negotiated settlement of federally reserved
104 water right claims for both Native American trust lands and other existing federal
105 reservations, and opposes any future designation of public lands that does not
106 quantify any associated federally reserved water rights.

107 (2) State agencies are encouraged to conduct agency activities consistent with Subsection
108 (1) and implement policies established by the Legislature that promote the near- and
109 long-term stewardship of water quality and water resources.

110 (3) This section does not create a cause of action against the state's or a state agency's action
111 that is inconsistent with Subsection (1) and does not waive governmental immunity
112 under Title 63G, Chapter 7, Governmental Immunity Act of Utah.

113 (4) The Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee shall review
114 the state water policy annually and recommend priority balancing and any other changes
115 to the Legislature.

116 Section 2. **Effective date.**

117 This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.