

Residential Turf Amendments

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Doug Owens

Senate Sponsor:

LONG TITLE**General Description:**

This bill addresses use of lawn or turf related to residential lots.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- defines terms;
- requires a municipality or county to adopt lawn or turf restrictions for certain newly constructed residences;
- allows a municipality or county to adopt more restrictive limitations; and
- makes technical and conforming amendments.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

10-9a-536, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 415

17-27a-532, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 415

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

Section 1. Section **10-9a-536** is amended to read:

10-9a-536 . Water wise landscaping.

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) "Great Salt Lake basin" means the area within:
 - (i) the surveyed meander line of the Great Salt Lake;
 - (ii) the drainage areas of the Bear River or the Bear River's tributaries;
 - (iii) the drainage areas of Bear Lake or Bear Lake's tributaries;
 - (iv) the drainage areas of the Weber River or the Weber River's tributaries;

- 31 (v) the drainage areas of the Jordan River or the Jordan River's tributaries;
32 (vi) the drainage areas of Utah Lake or Utah Lake's tributaries;
33 (vii) other water drainages lying between the Bear River and the Jordan River that are
34 tributary to the Great Salt Lake and not included in the drainage areas described in
35 Subsections (1)(a)(ii) through (vi); and
36 (viii) the drainage area of Tooele Valley.
- 37 (b) "Landscaped area" means the portions of a residential lot that are not, or will not be,
38 occupied by:
- 39 (i) a permanent structure; or
40 (ii) an impervious surface associated with vehicular or pedestrian access or use, such
41 as a driveway, sidewalk, or parking lot.
- 42 (c) "Lawn or turf" means nonagricultural land planted in closely mowed, managed
43 grasses.
- 44 [(b)] (d) "Mulch" means material such as rock, bark, wood chips, or other materials left
45 loose and applied to the soil.
- 46 [(e)] (e) "Overhead spray irrigation" means above ground irrigation heads that spray
47 water through a nozzle.
- 48 (f) "Park strip" means the area between the back of a curb or, if there is no curb, the edge
49 of pavement and the sidewalk.
- 50 [(d)] (g)(i) "Vegetative coverage" means the ground level surface area covered by the
51 exposed leaf area of a plant or group of plants at full maturity.
- 52 (ii) "Vegetative coverage" does not mean the ground level surface area covered by
53 the exposed leaf area of a tree or trees.
- 54 [(e)] (h) "Water wise landscaping" means any or all of the following:
- 55 (i) installation of plant materials suited to the microclimate and soil conditions that
56 can:
- 57 (A) remain healthy with minimal irrigation once established; or
58 (B) be maintained without the use of overhead spray irrigation;
- 59 (ii) use of water for outdoor irrigation through proper and efficient irrigation design
60 and water application; or
- 61 (iii) use of other landscape design features that:
- 62 (A) minimize the need of the landscape for supplemental water from irrigation; or
63 (B) reduce the landscape area dedicated to lawn or turf.
- 64 (2) A municipality may not enact or enforce an ordinance, resolution, or policy that

65 prohibits, or has the effect of prohibiting, a property owner from incorporating water
66 wise landscaping on the property owner's property.

67 (3)(a) Subject to Subsection (3)(b), Subsection (2) does not prohibit a municipality from
68 requiring a property owner to:

69 (i) comply with a site plan review or other review process before installing water
70 wise landscaping;

71 (ii) maintain plant material in a healthy condition; and

72 (iii) follow specific water wise landscaping design requirements adopted by the
73 municipality, including a requirement that:

74 (A) restricts or clarifies the use of mulches considered detrimental to municipal
75 operations;

76 (B) imposes minimum or maximum vegetative coverage standards; or

77 (C) restricts or prohibits the use of specific plant materials.

78 (b) A municipality may not require a property owner to install or keep in place lawn or
79 turf in an area [~~with a width~~] that is less than eight feet in any dimension.

80 (4) A municipality may require a seller of a newly constructed residence to inform the first
81 buyer of the newly constructed residence of a municipal ordinance requiring water wise
82 landscaping.

83 (5) A municipality shall report to the Division of Water Resources the existence, enactment,
84 or modification of an ordinance, resolution, or policy that implements regional-based
85 water use efficiency standards established by the Division of Water Resources by rule
86 under Section 73-10-37.

87 (6)(a) If a single-family detached dwelling that is newly constructed within the Great
88 Salt Lake basin on or after May 7, 2025, is located within a municipality, the
89 municipality shall:

90 (i) require that the lawn or turf in the landscaped area of the single-family detached
91 dwelling not exceed:

92 (A) 600 square feet for a lot size less than 4,000 square feet; or

93 (B) for a lot size equal to or greater than 4,000 square feet, the lesser of 15% of
94 the lot's square footage or 2,500 square feet; and

95 (ii) prohibit lawn or turf:

96 (A) in a landscaped area that is less than eight feet in any dimension;

97 (B) in a park strip; or

98 (C) on a slope that is greater than 25%.

- 99 (b) A municipality may impose a stricter lawn or turf restriction than a restriction
 100 imposed under Subsection (6)(a).
- 101 Section 2. Section **17-27a-532** is amended to read:
- 102 **17-27a-532 . Water wise landscaping.**
- 103 (1) As used in this section:
- 104 (a) "Great Salt Lake basin" means the area within:
- 105 (i) the surveyed meander line of the Great Salt Lake;
 106 (ii) the drainage areas of the Bear River or the Bear River's tributaries;
 107 (iii) the drainage areas of Bear Lake or Bear Lake's tributaries;
 108 (iv) the drainage areas of the Weber River or the Weber River's tributaries;
 109 (v) the drainage areas of the Jordan River or the Jordan River's tributaries;
 110 (vi) the drainage areas of Utah Lake or Utah Lake's tributaries;
 111 (vii) other water drainages lying between the Bear River and the Jordan River that are
 112 tributary to the Great Salt Lake and not included in the drainage areas described in
 113 Subsections (1)(a)(ii) through (vi); and
 114 (viii) the drainage area of Tooele Valley.
- 115 (b) "Landscaped area" means the portions of a residential lot that are not, or will not be,
 116 occupied by:
- 117 (i) a permanent structure; or
 118 (ii) an impervious surface associated with vehicular or pedestrian access or use, such
 119 as a driveway, sidewalk, or parking lot.
- 120 (c) "Lawn or turf" means nonagricultural land planted in closely mowed, managed
 121 grasses.
- 122 [(b)] (d) "Mulch" means material such as rock, bark, wood chips, or other materials left
 123 loose and applied to the soil.
- 124 [(e)] (e) "Overhead spray irrigation" means above ground irrigation heads that spray
 125 water through a nozzle.
- 126 (f) "Park strip" means the area between the back of a curb or, if there is no curb, the edge
 127 of pavement and the sidewalk.
- 128 [(d)] (g)(i) "Vegetative coverage" means the ground level surface area covered by the
 129 exposed leaf area of a plant or group of plants at full maturity.
- 130 (ii) "Vegetative coverage" does not mean the ground level surface area covered by
 131 the exposed leaf area of a tree or trees.
- 132 [(e)] (h) "Water wise landscaping" means any or all of the following:

- 133 (i) installation of plant materials suited to the microclimate and soil conditions that
 134 can:
- 135 (A) remain healthy with minimal irrigation once established; or
 136 (B) be maintained without the use of overhead spray irrigation;
- 137 (ii) use of water for outdoor irrigation through proper and efficient irrigation design
 138 and water application; or
- 139 (iii) the use of other landscape design features that:
- 140 (A) minimize the need of the landscape for supplemental water from irrigation; or
 141 (B) reduce the landscape area dedicated to lawn or turf.
- 142 (2) A county may not enact or enforce an ordinance, resolution, or policy that prohibits, or
 143 has the effect of prohibiting, a property owner from incorporating water wise
 144 landscaping on the property owner's property.
- 145 (3)(a) Subject to Subsection (3)(b), Subsection (2) does not prohibit a county from
 146 requiring a property owner to:
- 147 (i) comply with a site plan review or other review process before installing water
 148 wise landscaping;
- 149 (ii) maintain plant material in a healthy condition; and
- 150 (iii) follow specific water wise landscaping design requirements adopted by the
 151 county, including a requirement that:
- 152 (A) restricts or clarifies the use of mulches considered detrimental to county
 153 operations;
- 154 (B) imposes minimum or maximum vegetative coverage standards; or
 155 (C) restricts or prohibits the use of specific plant materials.
- 156 (b) A county may not require a property owner to install or keep in place lawn or turf in
 157 an area [~~with a width~~] that is less than eight feet in any dimension.
- 158 (4) A county may require a seller of a newly constructed residence within the
 159 unincorporated area of the county to inform the first buyer of the newly constructed
 160 residence of a county ordinance requiring water wise landscaping.
- 161 (5) A county shall report to the Division of Water Resources the existence, enactment, or
 162 modification of an ordinance, resolution, or policy that implements regional-based water
 163 use efficiency standards established by the Division of Water Resources by rule under
 164 Section 73-10-37.
- 165 (6)(a) If a single-family detached dwelling that is newly constructed within the Great
 166 Salt Lake basin on or after May 7, 2025, is located within the unincorporated part of

- 167 a county, the county shall:
- 168 (i) require that the lawn or turf in the landscaped area of the single-family detached
- 169 dwelling not exceed:
- 170 (A) 600 square feet for a lot size less than 4,000 square feet; or
- 171 (B) for a lot size equal to or greater than 4,000 square feet, the lesser of 15% of
- 172 the lot's square footage or 2,500 square feet; and
- 173 (ii) prohibit lawn or turf:
- 174 (A) in a landscaped area that is less than eight feet in any dimension;
- 175 (B) in a park strip; or
- 176 (C) on a slope that is greater than 25%.
- 177 (7) A county may impose a stricter lawn or turf restriction than a restriction imposed under
- 178 Subsection (6)(a).
- 179 **Section 3. Effective Date.**
- 180 This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.