Raymond P. Ward proposes the following substitute bill:

Great Salt Lake Funding Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Raymond P. Ward

Senate Sponsor: Scott D. Sandall

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill addresses funding of activities that benefit the Great Salt Lake.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- directs revenue generated by the brine shrimp tax to the Sovereign Lands Management Account instead of the Species Protection Account;
- provides for how the revenue is to be spent; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

23A-3-214, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 258

59-23-4, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 88

65A-5-1, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 277

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

Section 1. Section **23A-3-214** is amended to read:

23A-3-214 . Species Protection Account -- Reporting.

(1) There is created within the General Fund a restricted account known as the "Species Protection Account."

(2) The Species Protection Account shall consist of:

(a) revenue remitted by a county to the Division of Finance in accordance with:

(i) [~~Title 17, Chapter 56~~] Title 17E, Chapter 4, Part 2, Species Protection Funding

Act; or

(ii) Section 59-2-924.5;

[~~(b) revenue generated by the brine shrimp tax provided for in Title 59, Chapter 23, Brine Shrimp Royalty Act;~~]

[~~(c)~~] (b) tax revenue deposited into the Species Protection Account in accordance with Section 59-24-105;

[~~(d)~~] (c) tax revenue collected in accordance with Title 59, [~~Chapter 32~~] Chapter 33, Wind or Solar Electric Generation Facility Capacity Tax;

[~~(e)~~] (d) revenue collected in accordance with Title 79, Chapter 6, [~~Part 11~~] Part 14, Energy Project Assessment; and

[~~(f)~~] (e) interest earned on money in the Species Protection Account.

(3) Money in the Species Protection Account may be appropriated by the Legislature to:

(a) develop and implement species status assessments and species protection measures;

(b) obtain biological opinions of proposed species protection measures;

(c) conduct studies, investigations, and research into the effects of proposed species protection measures;

(d) verify species protection proposals that are not based on valid biological data;

(e) implement Great Salt Lake wetlands mitigation projects in connection with the western transportation corridor;

(f) pay for the state's voluntary contributions to the Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Account under the Central Utah Project Completion Act, Pub. L. No. 102-575, Titles II-VI, 106 Stat. 4605-4655; and

(g) pay for expenses of the State Tax Commission under Title 59, Chapter 23, Brine Shrimp Royalty Act.

(4) The purposes specified in Subsections (3)(a) through (3)(d) may be accomplished by the state or, in an appropriation act, the Legislature may authorize the department to award grants to political subdivisions of the state to accomplish those purposes.

(5) Money in the Species Protection Account may not be used to develop or implement a habitat conservation plan required under federal law unless the federal government pays for at least 1/3 of the habitat conservation plan costs.

(6) The division shall report to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee by no later than November 30, 2026, concerning:

(a) the amount of revenue deposited into the Species Protection Account under each revenue source outlined in Subsection (2); and

(b) how the division spent the money deposited.

Section 2. Section **59-23-4** is amended to read:

59-23-4 . Brine shrimp royalty -- Royalty rate -- Commission to prepare billing statement -- Deposit of revenue.

(1) A person shall pay for each tax year a brine shrimp royalty of 3.25 cents multiplied by the total number of pounds of unprocessed brine shrimp eggs that the person harvests within the state during the tax year.

(2)(a) A person that harvests unprocessed brine shrimp eggs shall report to the Division of Wildlife Resources the total number of pounds of unprocessed brine shrimp eggs harvested by that person for that tax year on or before the February 15 immediately following the last day of that tax year.

(b) The Division of Wildlife Resources shall provide the following information to the commission on or before the March 1 immediately following the last day of a tax year:

(i) the total number of pounds of unprocessed brine shrimp eggs harvested for that tax year; and

(ii) for each person that harvested unprocessed brine shrimp eggs for that tax year:

(A) the total number of pounds of unprocessed brine shrimp eggs harvested by that person for that tax year; and

(B) a current billing address for that person; and

(iii) any additional information required by the commission.

(c)(i) The commission shall prepare and mail a billing statement to each person that harvested unprocessed brine shrimp eggs in a tax year by the March 30 immediately following the last day of a tax year.

(ii) The billing statement under Subsection (2)(c)(i) shall specify:

(A) the total number of pounds of unprocessed brine shrimp eggs harvested by that person for that tax year;

(B) the brine shrimp royalty that the person owes; and

(C) the date that the brine shrimp royalty payment is due as provided in Section 59-23-5.

(d) In accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act, the commission may make rules prescribing the information required under Subsection (2)(b)(iii).

(3) Revenue generated by the brine shrimp royalty shall be deposited [~~as follows:~~]

[~~(a) $125,000 of the revenue generated by the brine shrimp royalty shall be deposited in the Sovereign Lands Management Account created in Section 65A-5-1; and~~]

[~~(b) the remainder of the revenue generated by the brine shrimp royalty shall be deposited in the Species Protection Account created in Section 23A-3-214~~] into the Sovereign Lands Management Account created in Section 65A-5-1.

Section 3. Section **65A-5-1** is amended to read:

65A-5-1 . Sovereign Lands Management Account.

(1) There is created within the General Fund a restricted account known as the "Sovereign Lands Management Account."

(2) The Sovereign Lands Management Account shall consist of the following:

(a) the revenues derived from sovereign lands, except for revenues deposited into the Great Salt Lake Account under Section 73-32-304;

(b) that portion of the revenues derived from mineral leases on other lands managed by the division necessary to recover management costs;

(c) revenues derived from the Great Salt Lake Preservation support special group license plate [~~described in Sections 41-1a-418 and 41-1a-422~~] created in accordance with Title 41, Chapter 1a, Part 16, Sponsored Special Group License Plates;

(d) fees deposited by the division;

(e) amounts deposited into the account in accordance with Section 59-23-4; and

(f) amounts deposited into the account in accordance with Section 59-5-202.

(3)(a) The expenditures of the division relating directly to the management of sovereign lands shall be funded by appropriation by the Legislature from the Sovereign Lands Management Account or other sources.

(b) Money in the Sovereign Lands Management Account may be used only for the direct benefit of sovereign lands, including the management of sovereign lands.

(c) In appropriating money from the Sovereign Lands Management Account, the Legislature shall prefer appropriations that benefit the sovereign land from which the money is derived unless compelling circumstances require that money be appropriated for sovereign land other than the sovereign land from which the money is derived.

(4) The division shall use the amount deposited into the [~~account~~] Sovereign Lands Management Account under Subsection (2)(e) [~~for the Great Salt Lake as described in Section 65A-17-201~~] as follows:

(a) the division shall expend $125,000 as directed by the Great Salt Lake Advisory

Council created in Section 73-32-302 for the benefit of the Great Salt Lake; and

(b) the division shall expend the remainder of the amount deposited under Subsection (2)(e) to benefit the Great Salt Lake by:

(i) leasing a water right for water to be deposited into the Great Salt Lake; or

(ii) funding a project that directly benefits or maintains the health of the Great Salt Lake brine shrimp population.

Section 4. **Effective Date.**

This bill takes effect on July 1, 2027.