

**Water Usage Modifications**

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Clinton D. Okerlund**

Senate Sponsor:

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**LONG TITLE****General Description:**

This bill addresses the use of overhead spray irrigation to irrigate nonfunctional turf.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- defines terms;
- directs municipalities and counties to take certain actions related to land use regulation including providing notice of the prohibition on the use of overhead irrigation;
- encourages municipalities and counties to take certain actions related to land use regulation; and
- prohibits an owner of specified land who undertakes new development or redevelopment of specified land from using overhead irrigation under certain circumstances, with exceptions.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

ENACTS:

**10-20-625**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

**17-79-621**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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

Section 1. Section **10-20-625** is enacted to read:

**10-20-625 . Regulation of use of overhead spray irrigation.**

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) "Active use" means regular use for a community purpose, playing, exercise, recreation, or regular outdoor activities, such as:

- (i) a sports field;
- (ii) a social gathering area;
- (iii) an amphitheater;
- (iv) a park;
- (v) the playing area, including a rough, driving range, or chipping or putting green of a golf course; or
- (vi) a cemetery.
- (b) "Agricultural land" means "land in agricultural use" as defined in Section 59-2-502.
- (c) "Common interest community" means the same as that term is defined in Section 57-25-102.
- (d) "Frontage" means the portion of a lot or parcel that abuts a highway or other public right-of-way, extending inward from the edge of the right-of-way or sidewalk along the right-of-way, where present, to the nearest parking area, structure, or fence on the lot or parcel.
- (e) "Great Salt Lake drainage" 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;
- (v) the drainage areas of the Jordan River or the Jordan River's tributaries;
- (vi) the drainage areas of Utah Lake or Utah Lake's tributaries;
- (vii) other water drainages lying between the Bear River and the Jordan River that are tributary to the Great Salt Lake and not included in the drainage areas described in Subsections (1)(e)(ii) through (vi); and
- (viii) the drainage area of Tooele Valley.
- (f) "Highway" means the entire width between boundary lines of every way or place of whatever nature, when any part of the way or place is open to the use of the public for vehicular travel.
- (g) "Landscaped area" means those portions of specified land that are not, or will not be, occupied by:
- (i) a permanent structure; or
- (ii) an impervious surface associated with vehicular or pedestrian access or use, such as a driveway, sidewalk, or parking lot.
- (h) "Land use application" means the same as that term is defined in Section 10-20-102.

- (i) "Land use permit" means the same as that term is defined in Section 10-20-102.
- (j) "New development" means a project for the conversion in use of previously undeveloped land into a developed state.
- (k) "Nonfunctional turf" means turf that:
- (i) is primarily used for aesthetic purposes;
  - (ii) is not primarily for active use; and
  - (iii) includes one or more of the following that is:
    - (A) installed within a highway median;
    - (B) restricted by a physical barrier that prohibits accessibility;
    - (C) not used as an outdoor activity area;
    - (D) an area with a slope greater than 25%;
    - (E) installed in a park strip;
    - (F) installed in a parking lot island;
    - (G) installed in the frontage of a commercial, industrial, or institutional property;
- or
- (H) installed in an area with a width of less than eight feet at the area's widest.
- (l) "Outdoor activity area" means a landscape area that is:
- (i) dedicated to active use; and
  - (ii) installed or maintained on an area with a slope of not more than 25%.
- (m) "Overhead spray irrigation" means above ground irrigation heads that spray water through a nozzle.
- (n) "Park strip" means the area between the back of a curb, or if there is no curb, the edge of pavement and the sidewalk.
- (o) "Parking lot island" means a designated area within the interior of a parking lot that is separated from paved aisles and parking spaces, typically by curbing or grade change, and planted or landscaped to provide aesthetic benefits.
- (p) "Redevelopment" means a project for renovation, alteration, improvement, or repair of developed land that affects more than 25% of the landscaped area existing before the redevelopment.
- (q)(i) Subject to Subsection (1)(q)(ii), "specified land" means real property within the Great Salt Lake drainage on which the owner proposes new development or redevelopment, including real property:
- (A) in a common interest community; or
  - (B) in a commercial, industrial, institutional, mixed use, or multifamily project.

(ii) "Specified land" does not mean:

(A) agricultural land;

(B) a landscaped area within a common interest community that is not a common area;

(C) new development or redevelopment of a single-family detached residential dwelling;

(D) local entity property as defined in Section 11-39-108;

(E) school property as defined in Section 53G-7-225;

(F) state government grounds as defined in Section 63A-5b-1108; or

(G) landscaping in a highway construction project governed by Section 72-7-112.

(r) "Turf" means a diverse set of living perennial grass species that:

(i) forms a maintained ground cover for active use or aesthetic purposes; and

(ii) is installed or maintained on nonagricultural land.

(2)(a) A municipality shall:

(i) require an owner of specified land to comply with Subsection (3) as a condition of:

(A) approval of a land use application; or

(B) issuance of a land use permit; and

(ii) include a notice on or with a land use approval or land use permit for specified land stating, "Section 10-20-625 of the Utah Code may prohibit the use of overhead spray irrigation for your project to irrigate nonfunctional turf."

(b) A municipality is encouraged to:

(i) review and either approve or disapprove a plan for new development or redevelopment of specified land with nonfunctional turf for which the municipality approves a land use application or issues a land use permit;

(ii) inspect specified land for compliance with this section upon completion of new development or redevelopment; and

(iii) address noncompliance with this section.

(3)(a) An owner of specified land who undertakes new development or redevelopment of the specified land on or after January 1, 2027, may not install, maintain, or use overhead spray irrigation to irrigate nonfunctional turf in a landscaped area of the specified land.

(b) This Subsection (3) does not prohibit an owner from using a reasonable amount of water to spray a landscaped area for a non-irrigation purpose, such as dust control for a specific event.

(4) This section does not apply to a business activity regulated under Title 40, Mines and Mining.

Section 2. Section **17-79-621** is enacted to read:

**17-79-621 . Regulation of use of overhead spray irrigation.**

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) "Active use" means regular use for a community purpose, playing, exercise, recreation, or regular outdoor activities, such as:
  - (i) a sports field;
  - (ii) a social gathering area;
  - (iii) an amphitheater;
  - (iv) a park;
  - (v) the playing area, including a rough, driving range, or chipping or putting green of a golf course; or
  - (vi) a cemetery.
- (b) "Agricultural land" means "land in agricultural use" as defined in Section 59-2-502.
- (c) "Common interest community" means the same as that term is defined in Section 57-25-102.
- (d) "Frontage" means the portion of a lot or parcel that abuts a highway or other public right-of-way, extending inward from the edge of the right-of-way or sidewalk along the right-of-way, where present, to the nearest parking area, structure, or fence on the lot or parcel.
- (e) "Great Salt Lake drainage" 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;
  - (v) the drainage areas of the Jordan River or the Jordan River's tributaries;
  - (vi) the drainage areas of Utah Lake or Utah Lake's tributaries;
  - (vii) other water drainages lying between the Bear River and the Jordan River that are tributary to the Great Salt Lake and not included in the drainage areas described in Subsections (1)(e)(ii) through (vi); and
  - (viii) the drainage area of Tooele Valley.
- (f) "Highway" means the entire width between boundary lines of every way or place of whatever nature, when any part of the way or place is open to the use of the public

for vehicular travel.

(g) "Landscaped area" means those portions of specified land that are not, or will not be, occupied by:

(i) a permanent structure; or

(ii) an impervious surface associated with vehicular or pedestrian access or use, such as a driveway, sidewalk, or parking lot.

(h) "Land use application" means the same as that term is defined in Section 17-79-102.

(i) "Land use permit" means the same as that term is defined in Section 17-79-102.

(j) "New development" means a project for the conversion in use of previously undeveloped land into a developed state.

(k) "Nonfunctional turf" means turf that:

(i) is primarily used for aesthetic purposes;

(ii) is not primarily for active use; and

(iii) includes one or more of the following that is:

(A) installed within a highway median;

(B) restricted by a physical barrier that prohibits accessibility;

(C) not used as an outdoor activity area;

(D) an area with a slope greater than 25%;

(E) installed in a park strip;

(F) installed in a parking lot island;

(G) installed in the frontage of a commercial, industrial, or institutional property;

or

(H) installed in an area with a width of less than eight feet at the area's widest.

(l) "Outdoor activity area" means a landscape area that is:

(i) dedicated to active use; and

(ii) installed or maintained on an area with a slope of not more than 25%.

(m) "Overhead spray irrigation" means above ground irrigation heads that spray water through a nozzle.

(n) "Park strip" means the area between the back of a curb, or if there is no curb, the edge of pavement and the sidewalk.

(o) "Parking lot island" means a designated area within the interior of a parking lot that is separated from paved aisles and parking spaces, typically by curbing or grade change, and planted or landscaped to provide aesthetic benefits.

(p) "Redevelopment" means a project for renovation, alteration, improvement, or repair

of developed land that affects more than 25% of the landscaped area existing before the redevelopment.

(q)(i) Subject to Subsection (1)(q)(ii), "specified land" means real property within the Great Salt Lake drainage on which the owner proposes new development or redevelopment, including real property:

(A) in a common interest community; or

(B) in a commercial, industrial, institutional, mixed use, or multifamily project.

(ii) "Specified land" does not mean:

(A) agricultural land;

(B) a landscaped area within a common interest community that is not a common area;

(C) new development or redevelopment of a single-family detached residential dwelling;

(D) local entity property as defined in Section 11-39-108;

(E) school property as defined in Section 53G-7-225;

(F) state government grounds as defined in Section 63A-5b-1108; or

(G) landscaping in a highway construction project governed by Section 72-7-112.

(r) "Turf" means a diverse set of living perennial grass species that:

(i) forms a maintained ground cover for active use or aesthetic purposes; and

(ii) is installed or maintained on nonagricultural land.

(2)(a) A county shall:

(i) require an owner of specified land to comply with Subsection (3) as a condition of:

(A) approval of a land use application; or

(B) issuance of a land use permit; and

(ii) include a notice on or with a land use approval or land use permit for specified land stating, "Section 17-79-621 of the Utah Code may prohibit the use of overhead spray irrigation for your project to irrigate nonfunctional turf."

(b) A county is encouraged to:

(i) review and either approve or disapprove a plan for new development or

redevelopment of specified land with nonfunctional turf for which the county

approves a land use application or issues a land use permit;

(ii) inspect specified land for compliance with this section upon completion of new development or redevelopment; and

(iii) address noncompliance with this section.

- 235     (3)(a) An owner of specified land who undertakes new development or redevelopment  
236     of the specified land on or after January 1, 2027, may not install, maintain, or use  
237     overhead spray irrigation to irrigate nonfunctional turf in a landscaped area of the  
238     specified land.
- 239     (b) This Subsection (3) does not prohibit an owner from using a reasonable amount of  
240     water to spray a landscaped area for a non-irrigation purpose, such as dust control for  
241     a specific event.
- 242     (4) This section does not apply to a business activity regulated under Title 40, Mines and  
243     Mining.
- 244     Section 3. **Effective Date.**  
245     This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.