

Great Salt Lake Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Nate Blouin

House Sponsor:

LONG TITLE**General Description:**

This bill addresses funding of programs with the objective of distributing water to the Great Salt Lake.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- modifies purposes for the Water Infrastructure Restricted Account in light of the reduction of money in the Water Infrastructure Restricted Account to fund the Great Salt Lake Account (account);
- modifies the purposes for which account money may be used for the acquisition or lease of water or water rights related to the Great Salt Lake; and
- makes technical and conforming amendments.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

This bill appropriates \$1,500,000 in operating and capital budgets for fiscal year 2027, all of which is from the General Fund.

This bill appropriates \$198,500,000 in restricted fund and account transfers for fiscal year 2027, including:

- (\$1,500,000) from General Fund; and
- \$200,000,000 from various sources as detailed in this bill.

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:**AMENDS:**

73-10g-104, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 522

73-32-304, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 208 and renumbered and amended by Laws of Utah 2023, Chapter 205

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

Section 1. Section **73-10g-104** is amended to read:

73-10g-104 . Authorized use of the Water Infrastructure Restricted Account.

Money in the restricted account is to be used, subject to appropriation, for:

- (1)(a) ~~the development of the state's undeveloped share of the [Bear and Colorado rivers, pursuant to]~~ Colorado River in accordance with existing interstate compacts governing ~~[both rivers as described in Chapter 26, Bear River Development Act, and]~~ the Colorado River as described in Chapter 28, Lake Powell Pipeline Development Act; and
- (b) to the extent the state has committed the money as of July 1, 2026, the development of the state's undeveloped share of the Bear River, in accordance with an existing interstate compact governing the Bear River as described in Chapter 26, Bear River Development Act;
- (2) repair, replacement, or improvement of federal water projects for local sponsors in the state when federal funds are not available;
- (3) study and development of rules, criteria, targets, processes, and plans, as described in Subsection 73-10g-105(3);
- (4) a project that benefits the Colorado River drainage in Utah, including projects for water reuse, desalinization, building of dams, or water conservation, if a county or municipality that benefits from the project:
 - (a) requires a new residential subdivision follow the regional conservation level of .59 acre-feet regardless of whether the outside water is potable, reuse, or secondary water;
 - (b) adopts and implements the local water conservancy district's emergency drought contingency plan;
 - (c) adopts and implements the local water conservancy district's grass rebate program's maximum grass restrictions;
 - (d) prohibits grass in new retail, industrial, or commercial facility landscaping;
 - (e) has reuse water be managed by the local water conservancy district;
 - (f) does not withdraw water from an aquifer in excess of the safe yield of the aquifer as defined in Section 73-5-15;
 - (g) adopts and implements excess water use surcharges;
 - (h) prohibits private water features in new development, such as a fountain, pond, or ski lake; and
 - (i) prohibits large grassy areas in new development, unless the large grassy area is open to the general public; and

- (5) a project recommended to the Legislature by the Water District Water Development Council, created in Section 11-13-228, for generational water infrastructure, as defined in Section 11-13-228.

Section 2. Section **73-32-304** is amended to read:

73-32-304 . Great Salt Lake Account.

- (1) As used in this section[;] :

- (a) "Mineral" includes a chemical compound that includes an element or mineral.
(b) "Mining" means the process of producing, extracting, leaching, evaporating, or otherwise removing a mineral from a natural deposit of the mineral.

- (2)(a) There is created within the General Fund a restricted account known as the "Great Salt Lake Account" consisting of:

- (i) revenues deposited into the account under Subsection (3);
(ii) appropriations from the Legislature; and
(iii) interest and other earnings described in Subsection (2)(b).

- (b) The Office of the Treasurer shall deposit interest and other earnings derived from investment of money in the account into the account.

- (3) The Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands shall deposit into the account the royalty income received by the state from mining that occurs on or after July 1, 2022, of a mineral from the sovereign lands of the Great Salt Lake if during the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020, the state did not receive royalty income from the mining of that same mineral from the sovereign lands of the Great Salt Lake.

- (4)(a) Upon appropriation by the Legislature, money in the account may be used to:

- ~~[(a)] (i) manage the water levels of the Great Salt Lake; [and] or~~
~~[(b) fund the activities of the commissioner and office under this chapter.]~~
(ii) make payments to negotiate agreements, leases, or other means to acquire or lease water or water rights for the Great Salt Lake.

- (b) Money deposited into the account under Subsection (2)(a)(ii) or appropriations transferring money from the Water Infrastructure Restricted Account may only be used for the purpose outlined in Subsection (4)(a)(ii).

Section 3. **FY 2027 Appropriations.**

The following sums of money are appropriated for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and ending June 30, 2027. These are additions to amounts previously appropriated for fiscal year 2027.

Subsection 3(a). **Operating and Capital Budgets**

Under the terms and conditions of Title 63J, Chapter 1, Budgetary Procedures Act, the Legislature appropriates the following sums of money from the funds or accounts indicated for the use and support of the government of the state of Utah.

ITEM 1 To Department of Natural Resources - Office of the Great Salt Lake Commissioner
From General Fund 1,500,000

Schedule of Programs:

GSL Commissioner Administration 1,500,000

Subsection 3(b). **Restricted Fund and Account Transfers**

The Legislature authorizes the State Division of Finance to transfer the following amounts between the following funds or accounts as indicated. Expenditures and outlays from the funds to which the money is transferred must be authorized by an appropriation.

ITEM 2 To General Fund Restricted - Great Salt Lake Account
From General Fund (1,500,000)
From Water Infrastructure Restricted Account, One-time 200,000,000

Schedule of Programs:

Great Salt Lake Account 198,500,000

The Legislature intends that the money transferred from the Water Infrastructure Restricted Account under this Item 2 be used for the acquisition or lease of water or water rights for the Great Salt Lake as provided in Subsection 73-32-304(4)(a)(ii).

Section 4. **Effective Date.**

This bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.