

1 **State Water Policy Amendments**

2025 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor:

2 **LONG TITLE**

3 **General Description:**

4 This bill amends the state water policy.

5 **Highlighted Provisions:**

6 This bill:

- 7 ▶ addresses water quality in groundwater;
- 8 ▶ promotes state water planning;
- 9 ▶ accounts for regionally appropriate water reuse; and
- 10 ▶ makes technical changes.

11 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

12 None

13 **Other Special Clauses:**

14 None

15 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

16 AMENDS:

17 **73-1-21**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2024, Chapter 37

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

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

20 **73-1-21 . State water policy.**

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

- 22 (a) Utah shall pursue adequate, reliable, affordable, sustainable, and clean water
- 23 resources, recognizing that Utah is one of the most arid states in the nation and as
- 24 such, there is, and will continue to be, a need to ensure Utah's finite water resources
- 25 are used beneficially;
- 26

27 (b) Utah will promote:

- 28 (i) water conservation, efficiency, and the optimal use of water resources, while
- 29 identifying intended and unintended consequences to ensure appropriate choice
- 30 and implementation of particular strategies;
- 31

- 32 (ii) water resource development and the creation of new water infrastructure
33 necessary to meet the state's growing demand and promote economic development;
- 34 (iii) compliance with state statutes regarding Lake Powell pipeline development and
35 Bear River development;
- 36 (iv) the timely replacement of aging or inefficient water resource, drinking water,
37 wastewater, and storm water infrastructure;
- 38 (v) the optimal use of agricultural water to sustain and improve food production and
39 the productive capacity of agricultural lands;
- 40 (vi) water quality in rivers [~~and~~] , lakes, and groundwater that:
41 (A) complies with state clean water and safe drinking water statutes; and
42 (B) protects public health;
- 43 (vii) water pricing and funding mechanisms that:
44 (A) provide revenue stability while encouraging conservation, efficiency, and
45 optimization efforts;
46 (B) adequately cover infrastructure needs; and
47 (C) balance social, economic, public interest, and environmental values;
- 48 (viii) respect for water rights;
- 49 (ix) standards for accurate water use measurement, telemetry, tracking, enforcement,
50 and reporting;
- 51 (x) efforts to educate and engage the public in:
52 (A) individual actions that protect water quality, including preventing and
53 mitigating water pollution; and
54 (B) conservation practices and the efficient and optimal use of water resources;
- 55 (xi) the implementation of cyber security and physical security measures for water
56 infrastructure;
- 57 (xii) the study and consideration of mechanisms for increased flexibility in water use
58 such as water banking and split season uses;
- 59 (xiii) continued improvements in the management of water resources through
60 protection, restoration, and science-based evaluation of Utah watersheds,
61 increased reservoir capacity, and aquifer recharge or aquifer storage and recovery;
- 62 (xiv) the development and beneficial use of Utah's allocated share of interstate rivers,
63 including Utah's allocations under the 1922 and 1948 Colorado River Compacts
64 and the 1980 Amended Bear River Compact;
- 65 (xv) the study and development of strategies and practices necessary to address

- 66 declining water levels and protect the water quality and quantity of the Great Salt
67 Lake, Utah Lake, and Bear Lake, taking into consideration natural climate change,
68 natural weather systems and patterns, and normal cyclic water level change over
69 time, while balancing economic, social, and environmental needs;
- 70 (xvi) regulations and practices, including voluntary practices, that maintain sufficient
71 stream flows and lake levels to provide reasonable access to recreational activities
72 and protect and restore water quality, quantity, and healthy ecosystems, including
73 protecting groundwater and surface water sources from pollution;
- 74 (xvii) equitable access to safe, affordable, and reliable drinking water to protect
75 public health;
- 76 (xviii) regulations and practices that encourage effective treatment of wastewater to
77 maximize its availability for beneficial use and minimize depletion and the further
78 degradation of other waters;
- 79 (xix) the control of invasive species that threaten or degrade waters of the state;
- 80 (xx) coordination among the state, water providers, water users, local governments,
81 government agencies, and researchers in the study of ways weather and climate
82 will impact future water supplies, demand, and quality;
- 83 (xxi) state water planning, including the formation of the state water plan as provided
84 in Section 73-10-15;
- 85 (xxii) water reuse where appropriate for the region in which the water reuse occurs;
86 ~~[(xxi)]~~ (xxiii) water laws, rules, and enforcement that are consistent with this
87 Subsection (1) and encourage transparency, order, and certainty in the use of
88 public water;
- 89 ~~[(xxii)]~~ (xxiv) the support and funding of research, science, and technology necessary
90 to achieve the provisions of this Subsection (1); and
- 91 ~~[(xxiii)]~~ (xxv) the collaboration, cooperation, and engagement of stakeholders in the
92 identification and advancement of actions that support the provisions of this
93 Subsection (1); and
- 94 (c) Utah supports the timely and appropriate negotiated settlement of federally reserved
95 water right claims for both Native American trust lands and other existing federal
96 reservations, and opposes any future designation of public lands that does not
97 quantify any associated federally reserved water rights.
- 98 (2) State agencies are encouraged to conduct agency activities consistent with Subsection
99 (1) and implement policies established by the Legislature that promote the near- and

- 100 long-term stewardship of water quality and water resources.
- 101 (3) This section does not create a cause of action against the state's or a state agency's action
102 that is inconsistent with Subsection (1) and does not waive governmental immunity
103 under Title 63G, Chapter 7, Governmental Immunity Act of Utah.
- 104 (4) The Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee shall review
105 the state water policy annually and recommend priority balancing and any other changes
106 to the Legislature.

107 Section 2. **Effective date.**

108 This bill takes effect on May 7, 2025.