



SPECIES PROTECTION ACCOUNT

PREVENTING LISTINGS UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT



Wildlife Resources

SPECIES PROTECTION ACCOUNT

- Established during the 1997 Utah Legislative Session (now Utah Code § 23A-3-214)
- Original purpose was “to protect any plant or animal species identified as sensitive by the state or threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973”



Desert tortoise



Ute ladies'-tresses



Pinyon jay

SPECIES PROTECTION ACCOUNT

FUNDING: 1997–2025

Flat funding: The annual budget for the account varied slightly, ranging from **\$3-3.5 million per year**.



\$2.45 million

Annual funding from a
1/16-cent general sales tax
tied to water



\$800K-\$1 million

Brine shrimp royalties
(\$0.0325-\$0.0375 per
pound of raw product)



\$1-2 million

Occasional one-time
increases from the
General Fund

SPECIES PROTECTION ACCOUNT FUNDING: 2026 AND BEYOND



\$2.45 million

Water tax retained

*This is the only
guaranteed funding we
have beyond 2027*



\$1 million

Brine shrimp royalties

*These will conditionally
sunset after FY 2027*



H.B. 378

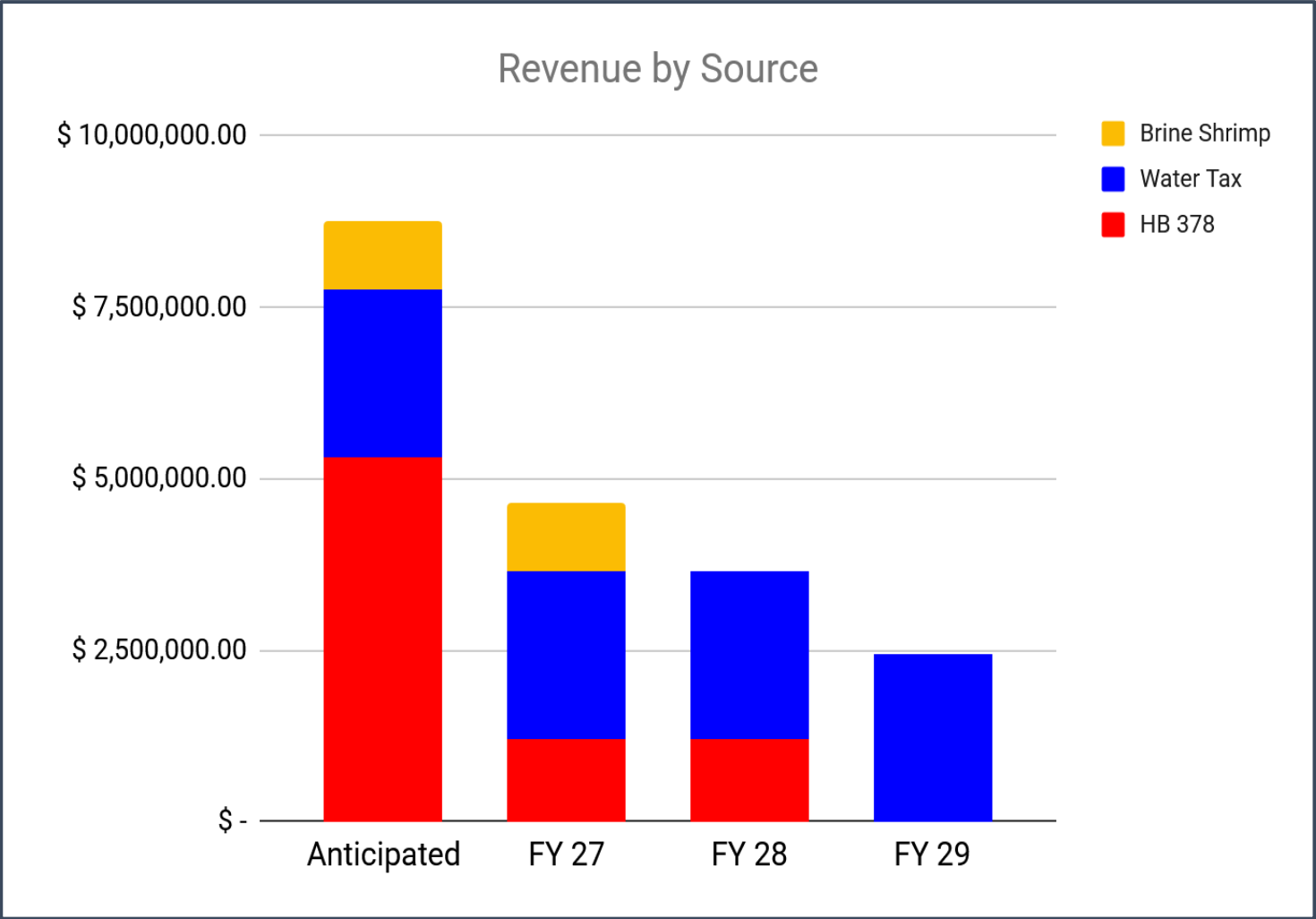
Renewable energy
tax

H.B. 378 REVENUE SOURCES

- **Energy project assessment:** Effective Jan. 1, 2026 (\$1.2 million generated)
Sunsets after December 2027
- **Radioactive waste and disposal:** Effective Jan. 1, 2026 (no revenue generated)
Lacking information on projections
- **Transmission facilities:** Begins Dec. 31, 2026
No qualifying projects yet
- **Renewable energy capacity tax:** Begins March 1, 2027
No qualifying entities yet
- **Centrally assessed new growth:** Begins June 2027
Unpredictable

SPECIES PROTECTION ACCOUNT FUNDING

This chart shows known revenue, as of **June 2026**.



SPECIES PROTECTION ACCOUNT: FUNDING ALLOCATION



RECOVERY WORK

\$1.73 million obligation annually

- Utah prairie dog: \$375K (avg. 5 years)
- Virgin River: \$730K (fixed)
- June sucker: \$300K (fixed)
- Colorado River: \$190K (avg. 5 years)
- Desert tortoise: \$135K (avg. 5 years)



MANAGEMENT AND PREVENTION WORK

Any **remaining funds** go toward:

- Management actions to prevent listing (personnel, equipment, etc.)
- Data collection (to close gaps)
- Beneficial habitat projects

ESA LISTINGS: WHY SHOULD WE CARE?

Wildlife is found everywhere, on properties owned by all types of landowners. Listings under the Endangered Species Act would:

- **Increase federal oversight and involvement**
- **Affect all Utahns** (because animals have no boundaries)
- **Carry economic impacts** — In 2016, an estimated average of \$975,000 per year* was spent on each listed ESA species across the U.S. (\$1.62 billion by state and federal agencies)

Only a small percentage of species are ever **downlisted** or **delisted**.

* U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered and Threatened Species Expenditures Report

ESA LISTING PETITIONS

Endangered Species Act petitions for listing species in Utah since 1997



~70 total species*

*Includes species with limited range in Utah and species in multispecies petitions

THE LISTING PROCESS

- **Listing petition:** Anyone can petition for federal listing
- **90-day finding:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determines if the petition merits a full review
- **12-month finding:** The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviews all available information — the state provides data during this phase
- **Final determination:** Listing is either warranted or not warranted



UTAH'S EFFORTS TO PREVENT LISTINGS

Since 2005, the **Utah Wildlife Action Plan** has identified:

- Species that need additional conservation help
- Species with data gaps
- Priority habitats
- Threats

The plan guides our efforts to:

- Prioritize resources and species of focus
- Coordinate efforts among partners



SPECIES PROTECTION ACCOUNT FUNDING: MANY SUCCESSES

- Since 1997, around **50 species** have been found **not warranted** for listing in Utah:
 - Greater sage-grouse, cutthroat trout species, milkvetch plants, etc.
- Since 2018, Utah has:
 - **Delisted:** Deseret milkvetch and Kanab ambersnail
 - **Downlisted:** June sucker and humpback chub



Thank you!



Wildlife Resources



Prevent ESA Listings

Notable Recent Not Warranted Findings

Species	USFWS Decision	Year Decided
Columbia Spotted Frog	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2002
Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2006
Colorado River Cutthroat Trout	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2007
Bonneville Cutthroat Trout	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2008
Pygmy Rabbit	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2010
American Pika	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2010
Northern Leopard Frog	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2011
Northern Leatherside Chub	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2011
Gila Monster	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2011
American Bison	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2011
Gunnison's Prairie Dog	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2013
Least Chub	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2014, 2023
Goose Creek Milkvetch	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2015
Greater Sage Grouse	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2015
Boreal Toad	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2017
Bifid Duct Pyrg	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2017
White Tailed Prairie Dog	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2017
Frisco Buckwheat	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2018
Frisco Clover	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2018
Ostler's Peppergrass	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2018
Subglubose Snake Pyrg	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2020
Virgin Spinedace	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2021
Graham's Beardtongue	Withdrawn	2022
White River Beardtongue	Withdrawn	2022
Cisco Milkvetch	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2022
Isley's Milkvetch	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2022
Stage Station Milkvetch	Not Warranted for ESA listing	2022



More than 45 species
NOT listed

Recovery and Delisting

Species	FWS Designation	Year
Deseret Milkvetch	delisted	2018
Kanab Ambersnail	delisted	2021
June Sucker	downlisted from E to T	2021
Humpback Chub	downlisted from E to T	2021
Razorback Sucker	proposed for downlisting from E to T	awaiting final rule
Ute Ladies Tresses	recommended for delisting	awaiting final rule
Utah Prairie Dog	Currently being evaluated for Potential Delisting	2028?



Utah Wildlife Action Plan (UWAP)

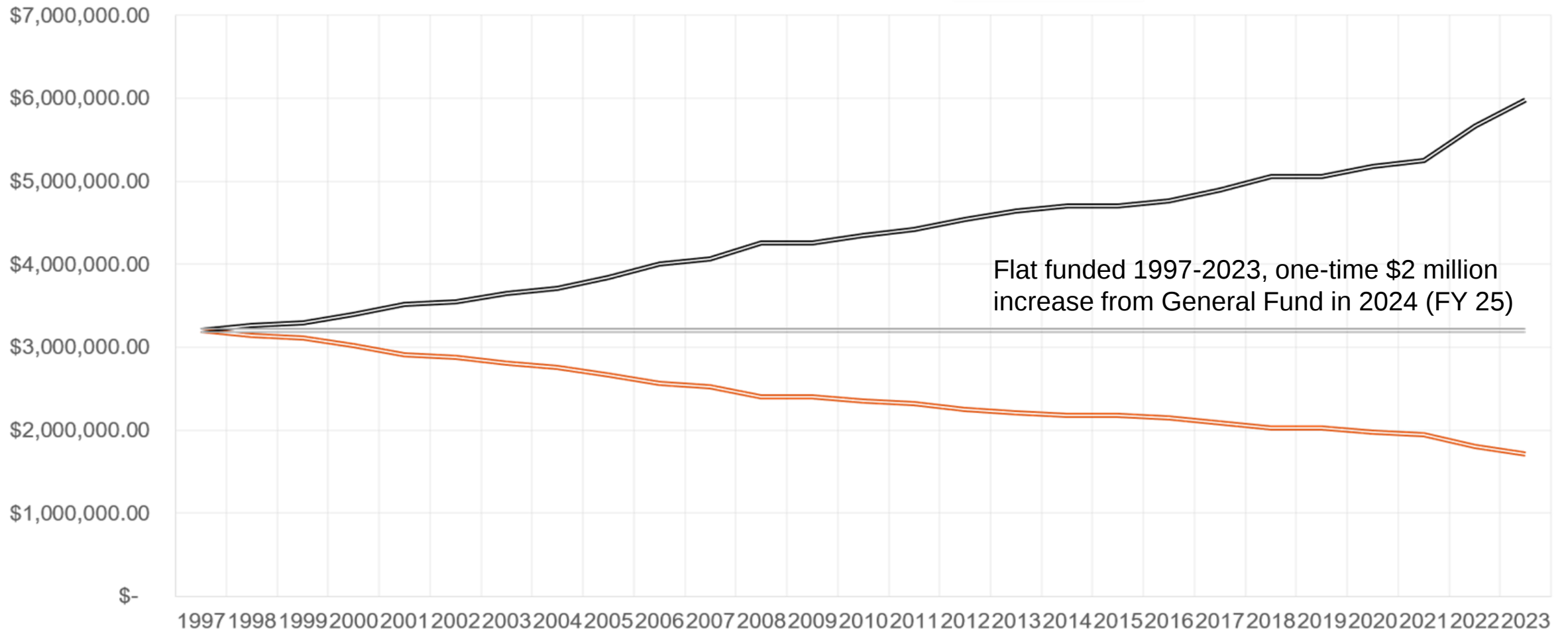
- Plan for native fish and wildlife (primarily those not hunted or fished), plants, and insects
- Federally required plan for states to capture Federal State Wildlife Grant funding
- The UWAP is a state partner plan, not a DWR plan
- Aims to facilitate and guide coordinated species, habitat, and threat abatement actions
- Non-regulatory document
- Purpose – ESA listing prevention



SPECIES PROTECTION ACCOUNT FUNDING

BUYING POWER OVER TIME

Buying Power Equivalent Value Current Funding



Species Protection Account Funding

2026 and Beyond



\$2.45 Million

Water tax still intact

**Only guaranteed funding
beyond 2027**



\$1 Million (FY 27)

Brine shrimp 59-23-4
(HB247 2026 conditionally sunsets in
FY27)



\$1.2 Million (FY 27)

Energy Project Assessment
79-6-1402
(Sunsets December 2027)

Upcoming Potential Revenue Sources

- **Transmission Facilities (17E-4-201):** Collected Dec. 31. Currently no qualifying projects.
- **Centrally Assessed New Growth (59-2-914.5(3)):** Begins in 2027. Unpredictable.
- **Renewable Energy Capacity Tax (59-33-201(5)):** Wind/Solar collected March 1, 2027. No qualifying entities yet.
- **Radioactive Waste and Disposal (5-24-105):** lacking information