

1                                   **WATER RIGHTS ADJUDICATION AMENDMENTS**

2   2018 GENERAL SESSION

3   STATE OF UTAH

4                                   **Chief Sponsor: Margaret Dayton**

5                                   House Sponsor: Scott D. Sandall

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7 **LONG TITLE**

8 **General Description:**

9           This bill deals with the procedure for filing a claim for the right to use water.

10 **Highlighted Provisions:**

11           This bill:

- 12           ▶ modifies the summons for a general adjudication of a water right;
- 13           ▶ states that if the state engineer receives an untimely statement of claim, the state
- 14 engineer shall return the claim to the claimant without further action;
- 15           ▶ authorizes the state engineer to prepare and file an addendum to a proposed
- 16 determination, under certain circumstances; and
- 17           ▶ makes technical changes.

18 **Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

19           None

20 **Other Special Clauses:**

21           None

22 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

23 AMENDS:

24           73-4-4, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2016, Chapter 72

25           73-4-9, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2016, Chapter 72

26           73-4-11, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2016, Chapter 72

27           73-5-13, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2013, Chapters 221, 343, 429 and last

28 amended by Coordination Clause, Laws of Utah 2013, Chapter 429

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

31 Section 1. Section 73-4-4 is amended to read:

32 **73-4-4. Summons for general adjudication of water rights -- Requirements to**  
33 **serve summons individually and generally -- Statement of claim requirement.**

34 (1) (a) The state engineer shall, by mail, serve a summons to a claimant of record in the  
35 state engineer's office within a general adjudication area, division, or subdivision.

36 (b) (i) The state engineer may serve, by publication, a general summons to claimants in  
37 a general adjudication area, division, or subdivision, who are not of record in the state  
38 engineer's office, if the state engineer files an affidavit with the district court, verifying that the  
39 state engineer has, in accordance with Section 73-4-3, searched the records of the state  
40 engineer's office for claimants in the general adjudication area, division, or subdivision.

41 (ii) The state engineer shall publish, in accordance with the Utah Rules of Civil  
42 Procedure, a general summons described in Subsection (1)(b)(i):

43 (A) once a week for five successive weeks in one or more newspapers, determined by  
44 the judge of the district court as most likely to give notice to the claimants served; and

45 (B) for five weeks, in accordance with Section 45-1-101.

46 (iii) Service of a general summons is completed upon the last required date of  
47 publication.

48 (c) The summons shall be substantially in the following form:

49 "In the District Court of ..... County, State of Utah, in the matter of the general  
50 adjudication of water rights in the described water source.

51 **SUMMONS**

52 The State of Utah to the said defendant:

53 You are hereby summoned [~~to appear and defend~~] in the above entitled action which is  
54 brought for the purpose of making a general determination of the water rights of the described  
55 water source. Upon the service of this summons upon you, you will thereafter be subject to the

56 jurisdiction of the entitled court and, if you have or intend to claim a water right, it shall be  
57 your duty to follow further proceedings in the above entitled action and to defend and protect  
58 your water rights therein. The state engineer will give a further notice sent to your last-known  
59 address, that you must file a statement of claim in this action setting forth the nature of your  
60 claim, and said notice will specify the date upon which your statement of claim is due and  
61 thereafter you must file said claim within the time set and your failure so to do will constitute a  
62 default in the premises and a judgment may be entered against you declaring that you have no  
63 right to the use of water not claimed."

64 (2) If the state engineer is required, under this section, to serve a summons on the  
65 United States, the state engineer shall serve the summons in accordance with federal law.

66 Section 2. Section **73-4-9** is amended to read:

67 **73-4-9. Failure to file a statement of claim.**

68 (1) The filing of each statement of claim shall be considered notice to all persons of the  
69 claim of the party making the same, and failing to make and deliver such statement of claim to  
70 the state engineer or the district court within the time prescribed by Section **73-4-5**, or as  
71 extended pursuant to Section **73-4-10**, shall be considered evidence of an intent to abandon the  
72 right.

73 (2) If a claimant fails to timely file a statement of claim, as provided in this chapter, for  
74 a right not of record in the state engineer's office, the claimant is forever barred and estopped  
75 from subsequently asserting the unclaimed right.

76 (3) If the state engineer receives an untimely statement of claim, the state engineer  
77 shall return the claim to the claimant without further action.

78 (4) If an untimely statement of claim is filed with the court, the state engineer shall take  
79 no further action unless a claimant's failure to file a timely claim is excused pursuant to  
80 Subsection **73-4-9.5(3)**.

81 (5) Subsections (3) and (4) apply whether the untimely claim is asserted pursuant to  
82 Section **73-4-5** or **73-5-13**.

83 Section 3. Section **73-4-11** is amended to read:

84 **73-4-11. Proposed determination by engineer to court -- Hydrographic survey**  
85 **map -- Notice -- Public meeting.**

86 (1) After full consideration of the statements of claims, records, and files, and after an  
87 examination of the river system or water source involved, the state engineer shall for the  
88 general adjudication area, division, or subdivision:

89 (a) complete a hydrographic survey map;

90 (b) prepare a proposed determination of all rights to the use of the water and file it with  
91 the district court;

92 (c) serve notice of completion of the proposed determination by publication and by  
93 mail, in accordance with Subsection [73-4-3\(5\)](#), to each claimant of record in the state  
94 engineer's office within the general adjudication area, division, or subdivision, that includes:

95 (i) (A) a copy of the proposed determination; or

96 (B) instructions on how to obtain or access an electronic copy of the proposed  
97 determination; and

98 (ii) a statement describing the claimant's right to file an objection to the proposed  
99 determination within 90 days after the day on which the notice of completion of the proposed  
100 determination is served; and

101 (d) hold a public meeting in the area, division, or subdivision covered by the proposed  
102 determination to explain the proposed determination to the claimants.

103 (2) A claimant who desires to object to the state engineer's proposed determination  
104 shall, within 90 days after the day on which the state engineer served the claimant with notice  
105 of completion of the proposed determination, file a written objection to the proposed  
106 determination with the district court.

107 (3) The state engineer shall distribute the waters from the natural streams or other  
108 natural sources:

109 (a) in accordance with the proposed determination or modification to the proposed

110 determination by court order until a final decree is rendered by the court; or

111 (b) if the right to the use of the waters has been decreed or adjudicated, in accordance  
112 with the decree until the decree is reversed, modified, vacated, or otherwise legally set aside.

113 (4) Following the proposed determination, the state engineer may prepare and file one  
114 or more addenda to one or more proposed determinations, provided the state engineer:

115 (a) files the addendum with the court;

116 (b) in the preamble, provides an explanation of the issues addressed in the addendum;

117 (c) serves the addendum, in the same manner as provided in Subsection (1)(c), on each  
118 owner of record, according to the state engineer's records, of a perfected water right authorizing  
119 the diversion of water from within the area, division, or subdivision covered by the addendum;  
120 and

121 (d) holds a public meeting in the same manner as provided in Subsection (1)(d).

122 Section 4. Section **73-5-13** is amended to read:

123 **73-5-13. Claim to surface or underground water not otherwise represented --**  
124 **Information required -- Corrections -- Filing -- Investigation -- Publication -- Judicial**  
125 **action to determine validity -- Rules.**

126 (1) (a) A claimant to the right to the use of water, including both surface and  
127 underground water, whose right is not represented by a certificate of appropriation issued by  
128 the state engineer, by an application filed with the state engineer, by a court decree, or by a  
129 notice of claim filed pursuant to law, shall submit the claim to the state engineer in accordance  
130 with this section.

131 (b) Subsections (2) through (7) only apply to claims or corrected claims submitted to  
132 the state engineer in accordance with this section on or after May 14, 2013.

133 (2) (a) A claim submitted under this section shall be verified under oath by the claimant  
134 or the claimant's duly appointed representative and submitted on forms provided by the state  
135 engineer setting forth any information the state engineer requires, including:

136 (i) the name and mailing address of the person making the claim;

137 (ii) the quantity of water claimed in acre-feet or rate of flow in second-feet, or both,  
138 where appropriate;

139 (iii) the source of supply;

140 (iv) the priority date of the right;

141 (v) the location of the point of diversion with reference to a United States land survey  
142 corner;

143 (vi) the place of use;

144 (vii) the nature and extent of use;

145 (viii) the time during which the water has been used each year; and

146 (ix) the date when the water was first used.

147 (b) The claim shall also include the following information, prepared by a Utah licensed  
148 engineer or a Utah licensed land surveyor:

149 (i) measurements of the amount of water diverted;

150 (ii) a statement that the quantity of water claimed either in acre-feet or cubic feet per  
151 second is consistent with the beneficial use claimed and the supply that the source is capable of  
152 producing; and

153 (iii) a map showing the original diversion and conveyance works and where the water  
154 was placed to beneficial use, including irrigated lands, if irrigation is the claimed beneficial  
155 use.

156 (c) The state engineer may require additional information as necessary to evaluate any  
157 claim including:

158 (i) affidavits setting forth facts of which the affiant has personal knowledge;

159 (ii) authenticated or historic photographs, plat or survey maps, or surveyors' notes;

160 (iii) authenticated copies of original diaries, personal histories, or other historical  
161 documents that document the claimed use of water; and

162 (iv) other relevant records on file with any county recorder's, surveyor's, or assessor's  
163 office.

164 (3) (a) A claimant, or a claimant's successor in interest, as shown in the records of the  
165 state engineer may file a corrected claim that:

- 166 (i) is designated as a corrected claim;
- 167 (ii) includes the information described in Subsection (2); and
- 168 (iii) bears the same number as the original claim.

169 (b) If a corrected claim that meets the requirements described in Subsection (3)(a) is  
170 filed before the state engineer publishes the original claim in accordance with Subsection  
171 (4)(a)(iv), the state engineer may not charge an additional fee for filing the corrected claim.

172 (c) The state engineer shall treat a corrected claim that is filed in accordance with  
173 Subsection (3)(a) as if the corrected claim were the original claim.

174 (4) (a) When a claimant submits a claim that is acceptably complete under Subsection  
175 (2) and deposits money with the state engineer sufficient to pay the expenses of conducting a  
176 field investigation and publishing a notice of the claim, the state engineer shall:

- 177 (i) file the claim;
- 178 (ii) endorse the date of its receipt;
- 179 (iii) assign the claim a water right number;
- 180 (iv) publish a notice of the claim following the same procedures as provided in Section  
181 73-3-6; and

182 (v) if the claimant is the federal government or a federal agency, provide a copy of the  
183 claim to the members of the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim  
184 Committee.

185 (b) Any claim not acceptably complete under Subsection (2) shall be returned to the  
186 claimant.

187 (c) The acceptance of any claim filed under this section by the state engineer may not  
188 be considered to be an adjudication by the state engineer of the validity of the claimed water  
189 right.

190 (5) (a) The state engineer shall:

- 191 (i) conduct a field investigation of each claim filed; and  
192 (ii) prepare a report of the investigation.
- 193 (b) The report of the investigation shall:  
194 (i) become part of the file on the claim; and  
195 (ii) be admissible in any administrative or judicial proceeding regarding the validity of  
196 the claim.
- 197 (6) (a) Any person who may be damaged by a diversion and use of water as described  
198 in a claim submitted pursuant to this section may file an action in district court to determine the  
199 validity of the claim, regardless of whether the state engineer has filed the claim in accordance  
200 with Subsection (4)(a).
- 201 (b) Venue for an action brought under Subsection (6)(a) shall be in the county where  
202 the point of diversion listed in the claim is located, or in a county where the place of use, or  
203 some part of it, is located.
- 204 (c) The action shall be brought against the claimant to the use of water or the claimant's  
205 successor in interest.
- 206 (d) In any action brought to determine the validity of a claim to the use of water under  
207 this section, the claimant shall have the initial burden of proof as to the validity of the claimed  
208 right.
- 209 (e) (i) A person filing an action challenging the validity of a claim to the use of water  
210 under this section shall notify the state engineer of the pendency of the action in accordance  
211 with state engineer rules.
- 212 (ii) Upon receipt of the notice, the state engineer may take no action on any change or  
213 exchange applications founded on the claim that is the subject of the pending litigation until the  
214 court adjudicates the matter.
- 215 (f) Upon the entering of any final order or decree in a judicial action to determine the  
216 validity of a claim under this section, the prevailing party shall file a certified copy of the order  
217 or decree with the state engineer, who shall incorporate the order into the state engineer's file



218 on the claim.

219 (7) (a) In a general adjudication of water rights under Title 73, Chapter 4,  
220 Determination of Water Rights, after completion of final summons in accordance with Section  
221 73-4-22, a district court may, by decree, prohibit future claims from being filed under this  
222 section in the general adjudication area, division, or subdivision.

223 ~~[(b) If the state engineer receives a claim for an area where a court has prohibited filing~~  
224 ~~under Subsection (7)(a), the state engineer shall return the claim to the claimant without further~~  
225 ~~action.]~~

226 (b) If the state engineer receives a claim for an area where a court has prohibited filing  
227 under Subsection (7)(a) or Section 73-4-9.5, or the claim is untimely as provided in Section  
228 73-4-5, the state engineer shall return the claim to the claimant without further action.