

**Representative Christine F. Watkins** proposes the following substitute bill:

**UTAH SAN RAFAEL STATE ENERGY LAB**

2024 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Christine F. Watkins**

Senate Sponsor: David P. Hinkins

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill establishes the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab and creates the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab Board.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- ▶ defines terms;
- ▶ creates the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab;
- ▶ creates the Utah Energy Research Account;
- ▶ establishes the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab Board (board);
- ▶ establishes the membership and duties of the board and the lab;
- ▶ outlines the purpose and duties of the board and the lab; and
- ▶ establishes a project proposal solicitation and approval process.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

This bill appropriates in fiscal year 2025:

▶ to Department of Natural Resources - Office of Energy Development - Utah San Rafael Energy Research Lab as a one-time appropriation:

- from the General Fund, One-time, \$2,000,000

**Other Special Clauses:**



26 None

27 **Utah Code Sections Affected:**

28 ENACTS:

29 [79-6-1001](#), Utah Code Annotated 1953

30 [79-6-1002](#), Utah Code Annotated 1953

31 [79-6-1003](#), Utah Code Annotated 1953

32 [79-6-1004](#), Utah Code Annotated 1953

33 [79-6-1005](#), Utah Code Annotated 1953



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

36 Section 1. Section **79-6-1001** is enacted to read:

37 **79-6-1001. Definitions.**

38 As used in this part:

39 (1) "Account" means the Utah Energy Research Account established in Section  
40 [79-6-1002](#).

41 (2) "Board" means the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab Board established in Section  
42 [79-6-1003](#).

43 (3) "Director" means the director of the Office of Energy Development as defined in  
44 Section [79-6-401](#).

45 (4) "Lab" means the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab established in Section [79-6-1004](#).

46 (5) "Lab director" means the director appointed under Section [79-6-1004](#) to oversee the  
47 lab.

48 (6) "Project proposal" means a formal written submission to the board applying for  
49 approval of a specific research initiative conducted at the lab.

50 (7) "Office" means the Office of Energy Development as defined in Section [79-6-401](#).

51 Section 2. Section **79-6-1002** is enacted to read:

52 **79-6-1002. Utah Energy Research Account.**

53 (1) There is created in the General Fund a restricted account known as the "Utah  
54 Energy Research Account."

55 (2) The account consists of:

56 (a) grants, entitlements, and other money received by the office from the federal

57 government;

58 (b) revenues from users of the Utah San Rafael Energy Research Lab, deposited into  
59 the account under Subsection 79-6-1004(2)(d);

60 (c) transfers, grants, bequests, and money made available from any source to  
61 implement this part; and

62 (d) money appropriated to the fund by the Legislature.

63 (3) The money in the account shall be invested by the state treasurer according to the  
64 procedures and requirements of Title 51, Chapter 7, State Money Management Act, except that  
65 all interest or other earnings derived from money in the fund shall be deposited in the account.

66 (4) Upon appropriation, the office may use money in the account for:

67 (a) administering the Utah Energy Research Grant Program created in Section  
68 79-6-403; and

69 (b) funding the ongoing operation of the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab, including  
70 compensation for lab staff.

71 Section 3. Section **79-6-1003** is enacted to read:

72 **79-6-1003. Utah San Rafael Energy Lab Board -- Duties -- Expenses.**

73 (1) There is established in the office the Utah San Rafael Energy Lab Board that is  
74 composed of the following nine voting board members:

75 (a) the director, or the director's designee, who shall serve as the chair of the board;

76 (b) the president of the University of Utah or the president's designee;

77 (c) the president of Utah State University or the president's designee;

78 (d) the commissioner of higher education, as described in Section 53B-1-408, or the  
79 commissioner's designee;

80 (e) one member, who is not a legislator, with experience in the non-regulated energy  
81 industry appointed by the speaker of the House of Representatives;

82 (f) one member, who is not a legislator, with experience in energy commercialization  
83 appointed by the president of the Senate;

84 (g) one member appointed by the governor who resides in a county of the third, fourth,  
85 fifth, or sixth class as described in Section 17-50-501; and

86 (h) two members appointed by the office with relevant expertise in energy research and  
87 development.

88 (2) (a) The term of an appointed board member is four years.

89 (b) Notwithstanding Subsection (2)(a), the person making an appointment shall, at the  
90 time of appointment or reappointment, adjust the length of board member terms to ensure the  
91 terms of board members are staggered so that approximately half of the board is constituted of  
92 new members every two years.

93 (c) The person who appoints a member under Subsection (1) may remove an appointee  
94 who was appointed by the person for cause.

95 (d) The person who appoints a member under Subsection (1) shall fill a vacancy on the  
96 board in the same manner as provided in Subsection (1).

97 (e) An individual appointed to fill a vacancy shall serve the remaining unexpired term.

98 (f) Unless removed for cause under Subsection (2)(c) a board member shall serve until  
99 a successor is appointed.

100 (3) (a) A majority of the board constitutes a quorum.

101 (b) A majority vote of the quorum is required for an action to be taken by the board.

102 (4) The board shall:

103 (a) foster innovation and support technological development in the energy sector by  
104 collaborating with industry leaders, researchers, entrepreneurs, investors, and other  
105 stakeholders;

106 (b) identify areas of economic growth and workforce development opportunities  
107 related to emerging energy technologies and solutions;

108 (c) seek potential investors and partners from the technology, finance, and business  
109 sectors to support innovative research and early-stage ventures focused on developing  
110 commercially viable energy technologies in the state;

111 (d) in consultation with the lab, identify and prioritize high-impact research projects for  
112 the lab aligned to the state's energy policy goals;

113 (e) develop evaluation criteria for approving project proposals, with input from the lab  
114 director, including:

115 (i) alignment with state energy policy priorities;

116 (ii) commercialization potential;

117 (iii) economic impact; and

118 (iv) other relevant factors as determined by the board;

- 119 (f) recommend allocation of lab resources for project proposals;
- 120 (g) approve providing matching grants to applicants under the Utah Energy Research
- 121 Grant Program created in Section 79-6-403; and
- 122 (h) consult with relevant stakeholders for input on energy research priorities and
- 123 potential collaborations.
- 124 (5) A member may not receive compensation or benefits for the member's service, but
- 125 may receive per diem and travel expenses in accordance with:
- 126 (a) Section 63A-3-106;
- 127 (b) Section 63A-3-107; and
- 128 (c) rules made by the Division of Finance pursuant to Sections 63A-3-106 and
- 129 63A-3-107.
- 130 (6) The board shall meet at least quarterly and may hold additional meetings as
- 131 necessary to review project proposals.
- 132 Section 4. Section **79-6-1004** is enacted to read:
- 133 **79-6-1004. Utah San Rafael Energy Lab established -- Lab director.**
- 134 (1) There is established within the office a program and facility known as the Utah San
- 135 Rafael Energy Research Lab to facilitate innovative energy research and development projects.
- 136 (2) The lab shall:
- 137 (a) receive and evaluate project proposals;
- 138 (b) submit recommendations to the board for approval regarding specific project
- 139 proposals based on the lab's evaluation;
- 140 (c) conduct innovative energy technology research and development projects that have
- 141 commercialization potential and support the state's energy policy goals;
- 142 (d) enter into financial contracts with entities seeking to use the lab, with revenues
- 143 deposited into the Utah Energy Research Account created in Section 79-6-1002;
- 144 (e) assess the viability of emerging energy solutions for deployment within the state,
- 145 considering:
- 146 (i) cost-effectiveness;
- 147 (ii) dispatchability;
- 148 (iii) sustainability;
- 149 (iv) reliability; and

- 150 (v) environmental impact;
- 151 (f) provide analysis and recommendations to policymakers regarding energy system
- 152 planning, infrastructure needs, and the value of different energy initiatives being considered
- 153 within the state; and
- 154 (g) collaborate with universities, industry partners, entrepreneurs, community
- 155 representatives, and other research entities.

156 (3) (a) The director shall appoint a full-time lab director with the consent of the board  
157 to oversee the day-to-day operations of the lab.

158 (b) The lab director shall report to the director.

159 (c) Subject to appropriations, the office may employ staff to support the lab's  
160 operations.

161 Section 5. Section **79-6-1005** is enacted to read:

162 **79-6-1005. Project proposal solicitation and approval process.**

163 (1) The lab shall have an open project proposal solicitation process to facilitate  
164 innovative energy research and development conducted at the lab that is aligned with the state  
165 energy policy.

166 (2) The lab shall receive project proposals from:

- 167 (a) academics and research faculty from universities and research institutions;
- 168 (b) private sector companies, including technology entrepreneurs and small businesses;
- 169 (c) government agencies and national laboratories;
- 170 (d) nonprofit organizations and foundations engaged in energy research; and
- 171 (e) other qualified research teams.

172 (3) (a) The lab shall evaluate the feasibility, merit, and potential impact of project  
173 proposals received under Subsection (2).

174 (b) After evaluating the project proposals, the lab shall submit recommendations to the  
175 board for specific project proposals that the lab advises approving, based on the evaluation  
176 criteria.

177 (4) The board shall review the project proposals and recommendations submitted by  
178 the lab and make final decisions on approval of project proposals for funding and  
179 implementation, based on criteria developed by the board under Section [79-6-1003](#).

180 (5) The office may make rules, in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah

181 Administrative Rulemaking Act, establishing detailed project proposal evaluation criteria and  
182 selection procedures.

183 Section 6. **FY 2025 Appropriation.**

184 The following sums of money are appropriated for the fiscal year beginning July 1,  
185 2024, and ending June 30, 2025. These are additions to amounts previously appropriated for  
186 fiscal year 2025.

187 Subsection 6(a). **Operating and Capital Budgets.**

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

191 ITEM 1 To Department of Natural Resources - Office of Energy Development

192 From General Fund, One-time \$2,000,000

193 Schedule of Programs:

194 Utah San Rafael Energy Research Lab \$2,000,000

195 The Legislature intends that the \$2 million one-time General Fund appropriation provided by  
196 this item be used by the Office of Energy Development to purchase the Utah San Rafael Energy  
197 Lab.

198 Section 7. **Effective date.**

199 This bill takes effect on May 1, 2024.