

2023 Water Legislation

Utah's 2023 legislative session expanded on the previous year's water legislation, expanding water infrastructure, development and conservation. Between 2022 and 2023's sessions, over \$1 billion dollars were appropriated.

Bill Summary	Impact to Water Resources	Actions Taken
HB 207 appoints the State Engineer as Chair of the Bear River Compact Commission rather than having that position appointed by the Board of Water Resources as done historically.	Changes the chair of the commission from being a Board of Water Resources appointee to being the State Engineer .	No division action needed.
HB 217 authorizes the Utah State Board of Education to issue grants to reduce the use of energy and water by a school district.	The division is part of a new review panel for grants.	No division action needed. If grants are issued, they will utilize Board of Education funds.
HB 307 provides for the creation of a new nonprofit, statewide partnership to optimize the use of water. Provides \$2 million one-time and \$1 million ongoing to the Division of Water Resources to help establish the Utah Water Ways Board, which will have 13 members.	Tasks the division with establishing the Utah Water Ways Board. The division will work closely with Utah Water Ways once it's established. The director of the division will serve as a board member. An executive director will be hired by August.	The executive director and several other Utah Water Ways staff have been hired. Currently, the organization can be contacted through Info@utahwaterways.org .
HB 349 prohibits approval of new water reuse projects that could impact Great Salt Lake. Provides for investigation of water reuse impacts as part of the integrated assessment of Great Salt Lake.	Adds an additional mandate to investigate potential water reuse project impacts on Great Salt Lake as part of the development of the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan (formerly the integrated assessment).	The integrated plan will provide information to assist decision-making about how urban conservation, water reuse and agricultural efficiency improvements affect individual water users and the lake.

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<p>HB 450 authorizes certain landscaping requirements for homeowners associations: requires use of waterwise plant materials and prohibits an HOA from requiring a homeowner to have more than 50% plant coverage.</p>	<p>Further facilitates waterwise landscaping within HOAs and prohibits certain landscaping requirements.</p>	<p>Bill made minor adjustments to statute, which are now in effect. No division action required.</p>
<p>HB 491 creates a Great Salt Lake Commissioner who will develop a strategic plan and coordinate the agencies and interests aligned with the lake.</p>	<p>Adds a member representing Great Salt Lake to the Board of Water Resources. The division will coordinate with the Great Salt Lake Commissioner as they engage in lake-related projects.</p>	<p>The Great Salt Lake Commissioner has been added to the board. The division also coordinates with him on Great Salt Lake projects, including the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan.</p>
<p>SB 76 addresses coordination of growth and conservation planning related to water. Provides \$500,000 one-time for grants to assist local governments with water planning. Also provides ongoing \$130,000 each to the Division of Water Resources, the Division of Drinking Water and the Department of Agriculture and Food for staff.</p>	<p>Requires certain municipal and county planning commissions to consult with the division when developing General Plans. Modifies requirements related to division rules for regional water conservation goals. Provides funding for a full-time employee to manage this effort.</p>	<p>The division has hired its employee to assist in this effort, who coordinates with their counterparts in the other agencies listed in the legislation.</p>
<p>SB 118 authorizes water conservancy districts to receive grants to provide incentives, provides conditions on when an owner may receive an incentive, addresses rulemaking authority and addresses tracking of local government implementation of water use efficiency standards. Provides \$3 million ongoing from the general fund for landscape conversion rebates.</p>	<p>Requires a municipality or county to report to the division regarding ordinance status related to regional-based water use efficiency standards. Requires the division to post eligibility status online. Requires the division to make rules for a landscape conversion incentive program and to operate it. Rebate programs and requirements related to these incentives can be found through Utah Water Savers.</p>	<p>The division successfully operates the landscape conversion incentive program in over 50 qualifying communities across the state. More communities adopt qualifying ordinances often.</p> <p>In 2023, 4 million square feet of grass were replaced with waterwise landscape options, which will save an estimated 104 million gallons annually.</p>



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<p>SB 119 provides that per capita consumptive use is the standard in certain geographic areas. Requires reporting districts to calculate per capita consumptive use.</p>	<p>Tasks the division with designating the reporting district that shall calculate the per capita consumptive use for each applicable county, with some additional conditions.</p>	<p>Calculations to come. Visit Water.utah.gov/water-data/water-use-reporting to learn more.</p>
<p>SB 251 provides additional exemptions to secondary water metering requirements under certain conditions.</p>	<p>Allows the division to provide exceptions for alternative metering requirements in coordination with the State Engineer.</p>	<p>The division has assisted with exemption requests for those who meet requirements.</p>
<p>SB 277 creates the Agricultural Water Optimization Committee. Addresses agricultural water optimization change applications and water savings. Repeals the Agricultural Water Optimization Task Force. Appropriates \$200 million for agricultural optimization; \$50 million ongoing for projects that benefit the Colorado River Drainage including water reuse, dam construction, desalination and other conservation projects; and \$5 million for construction related to Hyrum Reservoir.</p>	<p>Adds the division director to the Agricultural Water Optimization Committee. Tasks the division to coordinate with Water Rights and the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food to compile an annual report.</p>	<p>Statute is in effect and funds are being directed to the designated uses.</p>