

2024 Water Legislation

Utah's 2024 water legislation that impacted the Division of Water Resources primarily did one of two things: clarified and refined water legislation from 2023 and 2022 or made structural adjustments to statewide water planning efforts. These changes bolster the conservation and infrastructural gains made in previous sessions.

Bill Summary	Impact to Water Resources
<p>HB 11 restricts the use of overhead spray irrigation for local government, school district and highway authority properties in the Great Salt Lake Basin. Overhead spray irrigation is limited primarily to active recreation areas such as sports fields or playgrounds.</p>	Facilitates waterwise irrigation in the Great Salt Lake Basin by government entities.
<p>HB 62 requires Utah Water Ways to coordinate with the Board of Education to create standards-aligned resources and professional development opportunities for public education use.</p>	The director of the division sits on the Utah Water Ways board.
<p>HB 275 prohibits homeowner's associations from requiring turfgrass; permits the State Engineer to require data submissions appear in a particular format in the Great Salt Lake Basin; clarifies who is eligible for grant money for water conservation efforts other than secondary water metering.</p>	Facilitates waterwise landscaping by homeowners. Also, the Board of Water Resources distributes the grant money for water conservation impacted by this legislation.
<p>HB 280 modifies how the state water plan is created; requires a study of how water infrastructure projects are financed; requires the Water Development Coordinating Council to prioritize state water projects across water agencies utilizing the newly created Water Infrastructure Fund. The Utah Watersheds Council will advise the Water Development Coordinating Council.</p>	Requires the division to complete the next State Water Plan by the end of 2026. Also requires the division to complete the water infrastructure project financing study by November 2025. The director of the division sits on the Water Development Coordinating Council and is added to the Utah Watersheds Council as a nonvoting member. The Water Development Coordinating Council shall adopt a unified water infrastructure plan by March 2026.
<p>HB 295 requires the Board of Oil, Gas and Mining to regulate produced water (subsurface water extracted by an oil or gas well) to allow for nonconsumptive use without impacting water rights.</p>	Encourages oil and gas extraction companies to reuse their produced water instead of diverting more water from other sources.

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Bill Summary

Impact to Water Resources

SB 18 adjusts forfeiture provisions related to saved water, including as part of agricultural optimization, and ensures saved water is not put towards other consumptive projects.

Encourages water-saving changes, without reducing a water right, in a way that should increase returns to natural systems. Impacts state water planning performed by the division.

SB 125 modifies who may meter at strategic points of a secondary water system instead of every connection. It sets the limit at 2,500 or fewer users per system except in the Great Salt Lake Basin, where the limit is 1,000 or fewer users.

The Board of Water Resources distributes funds for secondary metering.

SB 211 creates the Water District Water Development Council as a joint administrator between the four largest conservancy districts in the state. This council will address anticipated generational (50-75 year) water needs.

The director of the division shall serve on the council to represent the needs of portions of the state not served by the water conservancy districts. The needs analyzed and solutions identified by the council will inform the division's state water planning.

SB 270 requires the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands to study enhancing habitat, conserving water resources, improving water quality and enhancing recreational use of Utah Lake. As part of the study, conditions that may impact Utah Lake's ability to deliver water to Great Salt Lake must be studied.

The Division of Water Resources will work with the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands as asked in the completion of their study.

