

Utah Division of Water Resources

Legislative Update 2026

As one of the fastest-growing states in the nation, Utah is committed to meeting the future demands of our population while maintaining the quality of life Utahns enjoy. The Utah Division of Water Resources implements programs aimed at making the state more waterwise for years to come.

Innovation

Water use preservation element – The division, in coordination with the Department of Agriculture and Food and the Division of Drinking Water, has developed outreach materials and assisted communities in developing a water use preservation element in their general plans, which is required for most municipalities and all counties.

Waterwise Webinars – In 2025, the division held seven landscape-focused webinars, providing residents with practical DIY water conservation tips. The webinars were popular and will resume in February 2026.

Cloud Seeding – Utah has replaced all manual cloud-seeding generators with new, remotely controlled generators. Currently, the state has 187 remote generators and three drone programs. In addition, the division is partnering with the National Center for Atmospheric Research, the University of Utah and Utah State University to develop a research project called SNOWSCAPE to better understand cloud seeding impacts in Utah's unique climates.

Funding

Project Funding – In fiscal year 2025, the Board of Water Resources contracted almost \$66 million in revolving funds, \$64 million in secondary meter grants and over \$4 million in dam safety upgrade grants.

Water Conservation – As of January 2026, 65% of Utah residents are eligible for the division's Landscape Incentive Program. Since 2022, it's been reported that almost 127,000 secondary water meters have been installed, and the division anticipates that number will grow to 162,000 by the end of the year.

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Planning

Unified Water Infrastructure Plan and the Water Infrastructure Fund – The newly created Water Infrastructure Fund, along with the Unified Water Infrastructure Plan, gives the Water Development Coordinating Council the opportunity for enhanced collaboration and strategic funding for water projects. The Unified Water Infrastructure Plan is on track to be completed by March.

Watershed Councils – Moving forward, the Legislature has tasked Utah Watersheds Council with additional responsibilities. As provided in HB 280 during the 2024 legislative session, the council will advise both the Water Development Coordinating Council and the Division of Water Resources on the 2026 State Water Plan.

2026 State Water Plan – The 2026 State Water Plan is a comprehensive framework that identifies available water supplies, estimates current and projected water demands and recommends strategies to meet those demands. It emphasizes the importance of water conservation and guides efforts to manage and protect available water supplies. The division will complete the next state water plan by the end of 2026.

Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan – Through the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan, the division is working to protect critical ecosystems for wildlife, recreation and Utah's economy. Four out of eight projects have been completed. These projects will provide essential insights that will shape the plan.



Why should Utah be waterwise?

- Utah is a desert state and its water future is one of the most significant challenges facing us today.
- Water is vital to Utah's agriculture, outdoor recreation and industry sectors. Ensuring reliable water supply protects jobs and economic growth.
- With rising temperatures, prolonged droughts and unreliable snowpack, Utah water resources are more vulnerable. Resilient systems help adapt to and mitigate these challenges.



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