



Legislative Update

February 3, 2023

We had a very productive week at the legislature. As of today, the 2023 session is 40% complete. This week was dubbed Water Week by the legislature, and we saw the introduction of, and action on, many water related bills, including several Utah Farm Bureau priorities. Yesterday, Warren Peterson and Wade Garrett spoke to both the House and Senate Majority Caucuses about water policy and shared Utah Farm Bureau's current and future legislative priorities.



(Credit: Utah Senate)

On Monday, Utah Farm Bureau testified before the House Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee in support of [H.B. 187, Veterinary Practice Amendments](#) (Rep. Kohler), [H.B. 261, Fire Related Amendments](#) (Rep. Snider), [H.B. 257, Greenbelt Property Amendments](#) (Rep. Kyle), and [H.B. 150, Emergency Water Shortages Amendments](#) (Rep. Albrecht). Each bill that the Farm Bureau testified on was favorably recommended. You can rewatch the hearing and listen to our testimony by clicking [here](#).



On Tuesday, we were on hand to watch the House pass [H.B. 33, Water Related Liability Amendments](#) (Rep. Albrecht) by a vote of 70-0-5. As we mentioned last week, H.B. 33 is the result of significant effort by the Utah Farm Bureau and Sevier County Farm Bureau President, Dustin Christensen. The bill will ensure that water facility owners and operators are not held liable for damage or injury caused by the diversion or discharge of water or another substance into the water facility by a third party, any other act

or omission of a third party that is beyond the control of the owner or operator, or an act of God, including fire, earthquake, storm, flash floods, or similar natural occurrences. We are working hard to secure a hearing for the bill soon before the Senate Judiciary, Law Enforcement, and Criminal Justice Committee.

On Wednesday, we testified before the Senate Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee on [H.B. 144, Water Instream Flow Amendments](#) (Sen. Hinkins). This bill will help Utah water stay under Utah control by ensuring that conserved water has legal protection to reach a reservoir. Recent federal legislation gives Utah the opportunity to voluntarily conserve water and store the savings in Lake Powell or another reservoir if a program is established in the Upper Colorado River Basin. The conserved water could later be released to offset mandatory reductions required under the Colorado River Compact. If the water supply in the Colorado River does not improve soon, Colorado River Compact provisions could trigger a mandatory reduction in Utah water use, known as “curtailment.” Curtailment follows Utah’s first-in-time first-in-right system, meaning water rights established last are cut off first. As this is a complicated issue, please don’t hesitate to reach out to us if you have any questions regarding the bill.

On Thursday, we provided comments on bills before the Senate Revenue and Taxation Committee on [H.B. 169, Urban Farming Assessment Act Amendments](#) (Rep. Peterson). Representative Peterson’s bill was favorably recommended to the full Senate for consideration, and we believe it will be taken up on the Senate Floor soon. You can rewatch the testimony on the bill by clicking [here](#). We also testified before the Senate on [S.B. 61, Livestock Collision Amendments](#) (Sen. Owens). This bill passed the Senate on Tuesday and was unanimously approved by the Committee. This bill mandates that railroads report all livestock collisions with trains, clarifies requirements regarding a railroad's duty to construct and maintain fencing along railroad rights-of-way, and requires each railroad to pay a fee based on mileage to cover damages to livestock caused by railroad operations. You can rewatch the hearing by clicking [here](#).

This morning, our CEO, Spencer Gibbons, joined Dr. Ken White, dean of the Utah State College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences to present before the Rural Caucus on the Agriculture and Rural Small Business Innovation Initiative. The initiative will provide e-commerce and other digital training to help rural small businesses scale their operations.



Looking to next week, on Monday, the Senate Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee is meeting to discuss a number of bills that the Farm Bureau is tracking including [H.B. 184, Veterinarian Education Loan Repayment Program](#) (Rep. Albrecht), [H.B. 187, Veterinary Practice Amendments](#) (Rep. Kohler), [H.B. 237, Hunting Mentor Amendments](#) (Rep. Albrecht), [H.B. 45, Domesticated Elk Program Amendments](#) (Rep. Stratton), and [S.B. 59, Beehive Requirements](#) (Sen. Kennedy). You can view the full agenda and watch or participate in the hearing by clicking [here](#).



As a reminder, we are regularly updating our [legislative tracker](#) under the policy section of our website ([UtahFarmBureau.org](#)), which provides further details for each specific bill. We also encourage you to read through the [2023 Utah Farm Bureau Policy Book](#) which can also be found under the policy section of our website. We would also like to remind you about Farm Bureau ‘Day on the Hill’ on Friday, February 24. A more detailed agenda will be sent out closer to the date.

We encourage you to actively communicate with our policy team with questions or comments on topics of concern.

Terry Camp
(801) 718-2769
terry.camp@fbfs.com

Wade Garrett
(435) 660-9292
wade.garrett@fbfs.com