



# Legislative Update

January 29, 2024

We loved seeing so many of you at the American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention in Salt Lake City. We were so proud of our Utah Farm Bureau members who came together with our staff to make the convention a huge success. We were fortunate to have participation from many of our Utah government officials including Rep. Celeste Maloy, Rep. Blake Moore, Governor Spencer Cox, Attorney General Sean Reyes, and Commissioner Craig Butters. At the convention, Utah Farm Bureau staff and volunteers filled 5,000 boxes of food, enough to fill four semi-trucks, to help people in need. We are grateful for the generous donation from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints through our Utah Farm Bureau Federation Miracle of Agriculture Foundation.



(ABOVE: Rep. Maloy interviewed by AFBF VP of Public Affairs, Sam Kieffer)

(ABOVE: Reps. Maloy & Moore pack food boxes at the service project)



On Tuesday, the American Farm Bureau Federation held its voting delegate session at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Salt Lake City. Utah Farm Bureau voting delegates were President ValJay Rigby, Vice President Wade Eliason, and Promotion & Education Chair Sherrie Tate. The delegates debated many issues of local, state, and national importance including labor, artificial intelligence technologies, grazing, and water policy.

Later in the afternoon on Tuesday, the policy team spoke in support of S.B. 18, Water Modifications (Sen. Sandall / Rep. Snider), before the Senate Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee. This bill is a priority for the Utah Farm Bureau this session and is a follow-up to S.B. 277, Water Conservation and Augmentation, which passed in the 2023 General Session. Among other things, S.B. 277 established a process for water users who install agricultural water optimization projects to file applications with the Division of Water Rights to put the “saved water” to another beneficial use. S.B. 18 revises those provisions, moving them into the State Engineer’s section of code, and adds language clarifying the definition of saved water and the administrative procedures to secure its separate use and protect it from forfeiture. We were pleased that the Senate Natural Resources Committee favorably recommended the bill by a vote of 6-0-2.

On Wednesday, the policy team testified during the House Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee meeting in support of S.B. 20 Agricultural and Wildlife Damage Prevention Board Amendments (Sen. Sandall / Rep. Brooks). This bill extends the sunset date for the Agricultural and Wildlife Damage Prevention Board. This board is responsible for the formulation of the agricultural and wildlife damage prevention policy of the state. The board deliberations specify programs designed to prevent damage to livestock, poultry, and agricultural crops and the methods for the prevention of damage for selective control of predators, depredating birds, and other animals. This bill was favorably recommended by a vote of 10-0-4.

On Thursday, the policy team attended the House Revenue and Taxation Committee to testify on H.B. 288, Rollback Tax Amendments (Rep. Kyle / Sen. Hinkins). This bill would exempt land acquired by governmental entities from the rollback tax and related fees under the Farmland Assessment Act and Urban Farming Assessment Act. The policy team spoke against the bill citing Utah Farm Bureau policy and asked that the committee hold the bill so the committee could discuss the topic more. The committee held the bill, and the policy team is working with Rep. Kyle to make modifications to the bill before it comes before the committee for consideration again.

As always, we welcome you to send our policy team questions or comments on bills or topics of concern. We also encourage you to read through the [2024 Utah Farm Bureau Policy Book](#), which can also be found under the policy section of our website. You can view upcoming committee schedules by visiting [le.utah.gov](http://le.utah.gov). Finally, please mark your calendar for Farm Bureau Day on the Hill on Friday, February 23. We will have a full day of activities on Capitol Hill.

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