



Legislative Update

February 28, 2022

We are down to the final week of the 2022 Legislative Session. On Friday night the Executive Appropriations Committee released the final budget numbers. Earlier in the week it was announced that state revenue estimates are higher than expected. New estimates added \$432 million in one-time funding and \$384 million ongoing funding to this year's budget. However, there were \$2.5 Billion in requests for one time funding and \$1 billion for ongoing. The state has approximately \$2 billion more this year than last year, largely due to the \$1.5 billion in ARPA funding that was received from the federal government as one time emergency relief from COVID. The USU Veterinary School received \$18 million in ongoing funding which will allow USU to move forward with the four-year vet school. Several other requests important to agriculture will also be funded with a large focus on water conservation:

- \$200,000,000 – Secondary Water Metering (ARPA)
- \$50,000,000 – Agriculture Water Optimization (ARPA)
- \$40,000,000 – Great Salt Lake Preservation (ARPA)
- \$30,000,000 – Utah Lake Preservation (ARPA)
- \$25,000,000 – Rural Drinking Water Projects (ARPA)
- \$1,000,000 – Food Security Pilot Program
- \$1,000,000 – Grazing Improvement Program
- \$360,000 – Slaughter Plant Inspectors

With only five days left in the session there is a bit of rush on some bills to try to push them through before Friday at midnight. We believe that most of our priority bills are in a good place and many have already passed. Here are a few that we are still working on:

[HB 378, Mining Operations](#) – If you have ever picked rocks out of your field and you did not have a mining permit from the state, you have been breaking the law. This bill changes the definition of a “boulder” so that you will be allowed to legally clear rocks from your property. You will still be required to have a mining permit to open a gravel pit.

[HB 423, Department of Agriculture and Food Amendments](#) – Every year UDAF runs what is called a “clean-up bill” designed to update the code and make any necessary technical changes. This year the changes clarify the department's ability to award grants, creates a yearly brand inspection for rodeo stock and allows brand renewal notices to be sent out by email. The bill was started late in the session but should still have time to pass.

[SB 235, Department of Transportation Adjudication Process Amendments](#) – This bill modifies the process that UDOT uses to compensate a landowner when they condemn property for creation of or expansion of a highway through eminent domain. It specifically changes the way they value buildings and we believe will more fairly compensate landowners.

On Friday, we had the opportunity to visit with the Mt Nebo Jr FFA (8th Grade) as they visited the Capitol. We always enjoy showing youth groups around and help them better understand the government and legislative process. Legislators love to see the blue FFA jackets, and many will go out of their way to say hello and visit with FFA groups. The Mt. Nebo group received an impromptu visit from Governor Spencer Cox. We are always happy to help Farm Bureau members and especially our youth with visiting the Capitol.

As always, feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns.

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