



Legislative Update

July 31, 2024

Interim Update

We hope everyone enjoyed celebrating Pioneer Day and is enjoying the remaining weeks of summer. The Utah Farm Bureau policy team is working hard to prepare for county annual business meetings and the 2025 General Session. Although the Utah State Legislature is considered part-time, lawmakers work to develop new laws year-round, including meeting with groups like Farm Bureau and holding interim meetings at the Capitol. Interim meetings are critical for the development of new laws before the 45-day General Session begins in January each year. Next year's General Session will begin on January 21, 2025.

During the interim, legislative committees, including both senators and representatives, study significant issues facing the state. This process differs from the General Session, where the Senate and House each have standing committees comprised only of their own members. During the interim, committee chairs prioritize topics for study based on issues not addressed during the General Session, incorporating input from committee members and the public. These topics are compiled into a master study list. Subsequently, interim committees listen to expert and public testimony to decide whether to recommend legislation and prioritize bills for the next General Session. Interim meetings are open to the public and can also be streamed live or accessed following the meeting at le.utah.gov.

The Utah Legislature met for Interim meetings in May and June. The State Legislature takes July off and returns for Interim meetings again in August. The May Interim meetings took place on May 14 and 15. The Utah Farm Bureau policy team attended several meetings of importance to agriculture. The first meeting was the Legislative Water Development Commission. At the meeting, the Commission reviewed bills passed in the 2024 General Session. The Legislature passed at least 19 bills related to water during the 2024 General Session related to water. You can read summaries of these bills in the table below. You can view the full agenda and rewatch the Commission meeting by clicking [here](#).

2024 General Session Water Bills			
Number	Bill Title	Sponsors	Summary
H.B. 11	Water Efficient Landscaping Requirements	Rep. Owens/ Sen. Winterton	Restricts the use of overhead spray irrigation by certain governmental entities.
H.B. 42	Water Rights Publication Amendments	Rep. Briscoe/ Sen. McKell	Permits the state engineer to confirm publication of a notice of application through electronic means.
H.B. 57	Snake Valley Aquifer Advisory Council Amendments	Rep. Brooks/ Sen. Sandall	Repeals the Snake Valley Aquifer Council chapter and removes language citing provisions of that chapter.

H.B. 61	Water Measuring and Accounting Amendments	Rep. Albrecht/ Sen. McKell	Modifies the state water policy to address telemetry and grants rulemaking authority regarding measurement and accounting.
H.B. 62	Utah Water Ways Amendments	Rep. Owens/ Sen. Sandall	Outlines coordination between Utah Water Ways and the public education system to create water related resources for grades K-12.
H.B. 206	Columbia Interstate Compact Amendments	Rep. Tom Peterson/ Sen. Sandall	Removes Utah's ratification of the Columbia Interstate Compact.
H.B. 275	Water Amendments	Rep. Snider/ Sen. Sandall	Addresses homeowner associations and water-wise landscaping. Clarifies who is eligible for grant money for water conservation efforts other than secondary water metering. Permits the state engineer to require data be submitted in a particular format under certain circumstances.
H.B. 280	Water Related Changes	Rep. Snider/ Sen. Sandall	Requires a study of the financing of water infrastructure projects. Enacts provisions related to planning and prioritizing water infrastructure projects and creates the Water Infrastructure Fund. Modifies provisions related to the formulation of a state water plan, the Water Development Coordinating Council, and the Watershed Councils Act.
H.B. 295	Produced Water Amendments	Rep. Lund/ Sen. Vickers	Addresses the Board of Oil, Gas, and Mining's regulation of produced water. Enacts the Produced Water Act. Addresses water right issues and enacts provisions related to possessory interests and control.
H.B. 453	Great Salt Lake Revisions	Rep. Snider/ Sen. Sandall	Addresses actions affecting the Great Salt Lake, including addressing mineral lease and royalty agreement provisions, modifying provisions related to severance taxes, enacting the Great Salt Lake Preservation Act, and directing the state engineer to develop a Great Salt Lake distribution management plan related to water rights.
H.B. 507	Construction Amendments	Rep. Musselman/ Sen. Bramble	Establishes standards regarding how municipality systems regulate controls for storm water runoff and inspect construction sites impacting storm water runoff. Establishes penalties for non-compliance.
S.B. 17	Safe Drinking Water Act Sunset Extension	Sen. Sandall/ Rep. Brooks	Extends the sunset date for the Safe Drinking Water Act from 2024 to 2029.
S.B. 18	Water Modifications	Sen. Sandall/ Rep. Snider	Addresses provisions related to saved water. Modifies requirements for grants for agricultural water optimization and repeals certain language related to agricultural water optimization.

S.B. 39	Water Shareholder Amendments	Sen. Sandall/ Rep. Snider	Addresses the timing of a water company's response to a shareholder's proposed change application.
S.B. 77	Water Rights Restricted Account Amendments	Sen. Sandall/ Rep. Snider	Modifies the purposes for which money in the Water Rights Restricted Account may be expended.
S.B. 125	Secondary Water Amendments	Sen. Hinkins/ Rep. Albrecht	Modifies who may meter at strategic points of a system as approved by the state engineer. Changes certain caps on grants for secondary water metering.
S.B. 211	Generational Water Infrastructure Amendments	Sen. Adams/ Rep. Schultz	Addresses the development of water resources, including creating the Water District Water Development Council to plan for generational water infrastructure and providing for the appointment of the Utah water agent to explore and negotiate possible water importation projects.
S.B. 242	Utah Lake Modifications	Sen. McKell/ Rep. Brammer	Repeals the Utah Lake Restoration Act and the provisions related to the Utah Lake Diking Project
S.B. 270	Utah Lake and Great Salt Lake Study Amendments	Sen. Bramble/ Rep. Stratton	Requires the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to conduct a study to determine how to enhance certain benefits associated with Utah Lake.

The Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee also met in May. The Committee approved its 2024 Interim Study List. The list includes several water-related topics including canal corridors and trails in active transportation planning, groundwater resources, methods for measuring saved water, funding for water-related capital projects, and the development of a water database. The list also includes the topics of raw milk, agricultural right-to-repair, and air quality. You can read the full list by clicking [here](#). Committee staff also produced a document with summaries of all 64 of the bills that passed during the 2024 General Session in the Committee's jurisdiction. You can view this document by clicking [here](#). The Committee also listened to presentations on the water supply and forecast, the Great Salt Lake Basin Integrated Plan, and the Livestock Brand Board. You can find materials for the meeting and rewatch the meeting by clicking [here](#).

On June 17, the day before the June Interim meetings, the Utah Farm Bureau participated in a legislative field tour sponsored by Utah AGPAC (Agriculture Political Action Committee). Nine state legislators as well as Utah Department of Agriculture and Food (UDAF) Commissioner Craig Buttars and members of his team participated in the field tour. The field tour consisted of visits to Gossner Foods, Sid Munk's dairy, a visit to an agricultural water optimization project, and a tour of the Associated Foods Distribution Center.



The Legislature met again for Interim meetings on June 18 and 19. The Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee met on June 18 and heard presentations on the Predator Control Program, water conservation incentives, the Utah State University Forest Restoration Institute, and other topics. Leann Hunting, representing UDAF, presented on the Predator Control Program. She reported that as of October 2023, UDAF officially parted ways with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Wildlife Services and is now managing the program in conjunction with the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources (DWR). Additionally, she reported that UDAF and DWR maintained and entered into two new contracts for fixed-wing aircraft, bringing the total aircraft to five fixed-wing, and eight rotary-wing. She also reported that UDAF trappers received wolf training for Colorado's wolf introduction and that Colorado added UDAF trappers to the 10a1a permit for the capturing of Colorado wolves. UDAF also received a Migratory Bird Permit and EPA label change on DRC-1339 for employees and contractors to take ravens. Finally, she noted that the Utah Wool Growers Association generously provided all trappers with new thermal scopes. You can view the agenda and materials for the hearing as well as rewatch the presentations by clicking [here](#).

The Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee met the following day. The Committee invited the policy team to present on agricultural land conservation and right-to-repair for agricultural equipment. Terry Camp, VP – Public Policy, presented jointly with Jeremy Christensen, Land Conservation Program Manager, UDAF. Terry and Jeremy discussed concerns about agricultural land loss in Utah. Since 1960, Utah has lost 2.7 million acres, or nearly 20% of its farmland. Terry and Jeremy also discussed population growth and how it continues to put pressure on farmland. The presentation highlighted agricultural conservation easements as one tool to preserve farmland and the need for the State of Utah to invest more into easements. Roughly \$10-\$12 million in additional matching funds are needed to leverage available federal investments. The Salt Lake Tribune covered this presentation. You can read the article [here](#).

Following the agricultural land conservation presentation, Wade Garrett, VP – Advocacy and Strategic Relations for UFBB, provided the committee with the Utah Farm Bureau's perspective on right-to-repair legislation. The UFBB is not supportive of state-level right-to-repair legislation. Recently, the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) entered into memorandums of understanding (MOU) with five of the largest agricultural equipment manufacturers (John Deere, Case IH, CLAAS, AGCO, and Kubota).

AFBF preferred to find a solution within the industry instead of relying on legislative or regulatory action.

These MOUs set parameters for addressing issues between farmers and manufacturers and create a mechanism to address farmers' concerns if a resolution is not achieved. Via a simple portal on the American Farm Bureau website (<https://www.fb.org/files/FORM-Manufacturer-Issue-Reporting-Form.pdf>), any farmer unable to resolve an issue directly with their dealer can provide feedback regarding any manufacturer with a signed MOU. The MOUs also provide for a semi-annual check-in period, so if the AFBF receives complaints from our members about any violation of any terms of the MOUs, then AFBF raises those complaints with the manufacturer during these meetings. The UFBF would like to give these MOUs time to play out before we advocate for or support any agricultural right-to-repair legislation. If you would like to learn more about AFBF's involvement in these manufacturer MOUs, visit the AFBF website (<https://www.fb.org/topic/mou>). You can also search MOU and the manufacturer you are interested in to read the specific MOU. You can view the agenda and materials for the hearing as well as rewatch the presentations by clicking [here](#).

Later in the day on June 18, the Legislative Water Development Commission met. The Commission received an update on the Colorado River from Amy Haas, executive director of the Colorado River Authority of Utah. Amy discussed snowpack, basin-wide depletion trends, and competing alternatives. Additionally, the Commission listened to presentations on aqueduct resilience, cloud seeding, and water reuse. You can view the agenda and materials for the hearing as well as rewatch the presentations by clicking [here](#).

In early July, the policy team traveled to Washington, D.C. for Council of Presidents and staff met with Elected Members and staff from each of Utah's House and Senate offices. The policy team discussed the need for a new Farm Bill and the importance of extending several provisions of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act that are important to agriculture. These are either expiring or set to expire next year.



Clockwise, from top left: CEO Spencer Gibbons, Rep. John Curtis, President Valjay Rigby, Terry Camp; UFBF Delegation with Rep. Celeste Maloy; President Valjay Rigby (right) with Rep. Burgess Owens; UFBF delegation with Rep. Blake Moore.

The next dates for Interim Session are August 19-21. You can view the upcoming schedule by visiting le.utah.gov. As always, we encourage you to actively send our policy team questions or comments on 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.

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