



Legislative Update

February 11, 2026

Week Three (February 2-6, 2026)

The session is nearly halfway done. During the third week of the 2026 General Session, Utah Farm Bureau primarily focused its efforts on strengthening agricultural education and improving water policy.

HB 369 – Agriculture and Food Amendments (Rep. Albrecht)

On February 2, the Utah Farm Bureau spoke in favor of a pair of bills before the House Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee. First, we spoke in support of H.B. 369, Agriculture and Food Amendments. This bill is the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food's annual "clean-up" bill, making mostly technical updates to agriculture statutes. Among other things, the bill creates a dedicated 'Weights and Measures Fund' to support maintenance, repair, and purchase of specialized vehicles, cranes and lifts, weight carts, and field, metrology, and fuel laboratory equipment. The bill limits the Agricultural Resource Development Loan (ARDL) disaster-relief loans to no more than 10% of the combined total of the fund balance and outstanding loans, updates the definition of "brand" to ensure identifiable marks include cutting and shaping of ears, and clarifies that the Commissioner may remove a board member for cause from the Conservation Board of Supervisors. It also changes a water optimization grant provision from "shall" to "may," so applicants are no longer required to complete a pre-filing consultation with the Division of Water Resources before applying.

HB 349 – Statewide Water Storage (Rep. Brooks)

We also testified on H.B. 349, Statewide Water Storage. This bill addresses statewide water storage by authorizing the use of the Water Infrastructure Restricted Account and other mechanisms to support storage projects across Utah. Utah Farm Bureau emphasized the importance of long-term water storage and infrastructure as a foundation for the state's agricultural and rural economies. Utah Farm Bureau's testimony also urged the bill sponsor to consider adding underground storage, given its capacity to retain water and reduce evaporative losses. You can rewatch the hearing by clicking [here](#).



Photo Credit: Terry Camp

HB 378 – Fugitive Dust Mitigation Amendments (Rep. Gricius)

On February 3, Utah Farm Bureau testified in support of H.B. 378, Fugitive Dust Mitigation Amendments, before the House Public Utilities and Energy Committee. The bill allows the Division of Air Quality to impose an aggregate compliance fee up to certain amounts on a covered facility to support additional inspectors and inspections, and requires covered facilities to post informational signage that is clearly visible so that members of the public know who to contact at the site to share concerns about fugitive dust. Utah Farm Bureau plans to continue working with the bill sponsor and aggregate companies to find additional ways to mitigate fugitive dust.

FFA Teacher Mentor Request for Appropriation (Rep. Owens)

On February 5, the Utah Farm Bureau testified before the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environmental Quality Appropriations Subcommittee in support of an ongoing request for \$120,500 in appropriations for an FFA Utah State University teacher-mentor faculty position. The request, sponsored by Rep. Doug Owens, would fund a 9-month faculty role in the S.J. & Jessie E. Quinney College of Agriculture & Natural Resources at USU.

Buddy Deimler, retired agricultural education specialist and State FFA advisor, testified on behalf of Farm Bureau. Buddy's remarks emphasized that Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) like FFA provide a cost-effective and widely accessible pathway for student leadership development, technical skill-building, and community engagement. The teacher mentor would provide guidance to agricultural educators, in-service training and professional development, and assistance with curriculum development, classroom management, and teaching methodologies to ensure FFA chapters remain aligned with modern agricultural education standards. Buddy underscored that funding for this position will help maintain Utah's pipeline of qualified agricultural educators and strengthen agricultural instruction statewide. You can watch Buddy's presentation with Rep. Owens by clicking [here](#).

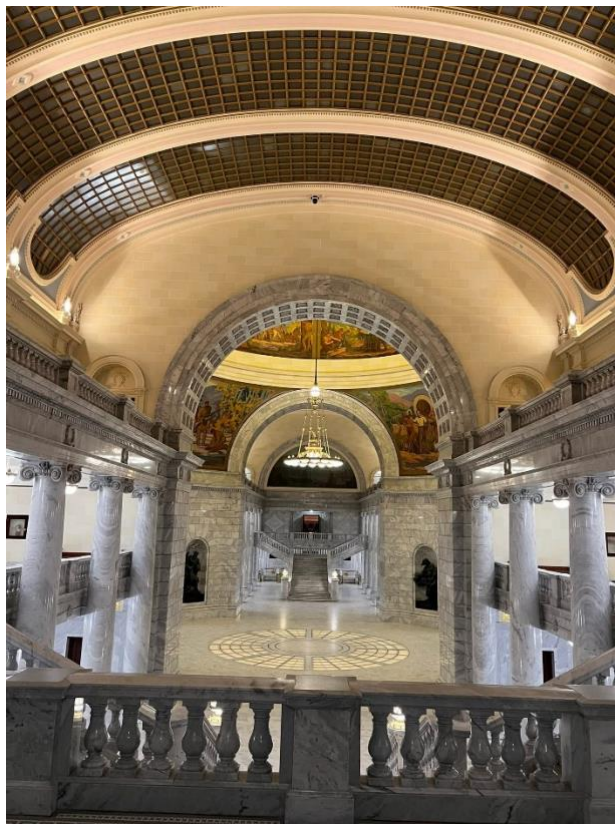


Photo Credit: Rep. Tom Peterson

HB 348 – Dedicated Water Amendments (Rep. Koford)

In the afternoon of February 5th, the Utah Farm Bureau testified on two additional water bills before the House Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Committee. The first, H.B. 348, Dedicated Water Amendments, refines the tools available for dedicating agricultural water to environmental and system purposes while adding important sideboards to protect continued production agriculture. The bill defines a “dedicated water application” as an application to change the existing nature of use under a water right by adding an instream flow use, use on sovereign lands, or a project to deliver water in the Colorado River System. It also authorizes the state engineer to deny a dedicated water application if approval would prevent a field from being irrigated for more than two years within a five-year period, ensuring that new dedication mechanisms do not result in effective long-term fallowing of farmland.

HB 410 – Water Leasing Amendments (Rep. Koford)

Utah Farm Bureau also testified in support of H.B. 410, Water Leasing Amendments. This bill establishes the Great Salt Lake Preservation Program to temporarily lease water from agricultural water users for delivery to the lake, creating a voluntary, compensated pathway for producers to participate in lake restoration efforts. The bill creates a five-member board with three voting members (an agriculture representative, executive director of the Department of Natural Resources, and the commissioner of the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food) and two non-voting members (the state engineer and the Great Salt Lake commissioner’s designee), to administer the program and set leasing rates, with the board accepting annual applications from agricultural water users wishing to lease water. You can rewatch the hearing by clicking [here](#).

Ag Teacher Day on the Hill

Utah Farm Bureau also capped off the week by hosting agricultural educators from across the state for a ‘Day on the Hill’ at the Capitol on Friday. The group attended the Rural Caucus, where they heard presentations on current issues affecting rural Utah. Educators then met with state legislators and agency leaders, including Commissioner Kelly Pehrson, to discuss agricultural education priorities and the impact of state policy on local programs. Throughout the day, participants learned about the legislative process, committee work, and how to most effectively engage with policymakers.



Ag Teachers with Commissioner Kelly Pehrson (Photo Credit: Terry Camp)

Policy Resources

As the session continues, please remember that you can follow priority legislation through the Utah Farm Bureau Legislative Tracker, available under the [“Policy & Action”](#) tab on our website. The 2026 Policy Book is also now online, and you can read it by clicking [here](#). You can find your state representative and senator by typing your address in the search bar on this [page](#).

As always, we encourage you to submit questions or comments to our policy team regarding topics of concern.

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