

**House Public Utilities and Energy Committee**  
02/18/2026

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**Bill: HB 489 - Water Infrastructure Amendments**

Sponsor: Representative T. Peterson

Floor Sponsor:

**UASD Position: Oppose**

This Bill addresses use of retention and detention basins.

Discussion: The sponsor stated that the Bill limits the option to use retention basins within the Great Salt Lake basin in favor of detention basins. Cities and counties would be required to use detention basins. The legislation applies only to areas that drain into the Great Salt Lake basin and is not retroactive.

The sponsor described the measure as one step toward addressing water quality and quantity concerns for the Great Salt Lake (“Lake”), explaining that retention basins allow water to stagnate, which can create mosquito-infested areas and unused spaces in land development. In contrast, detention basins temporarily hold water and then release it, lessening the impact on storm drains while allowing water to continue flowing toward the Lake. The sponsor emphasized that this is a small but meaningful step to help improve Lake levels and water quality.

Representative Chew asked whether the goal is to ensure water is collected. The sponsor responded that the goal is to prevent water from stagnating in ponds and instead allow it to return to the basin system.

Representative Jack asked what type of barrier is used to hold and release water as needed. The sponsor clarified that detention basins are designed to hold water temporarily and release it in a controlled manner, whereas retention basins capture water and do not release it.

Representative Dominguez asked whether the Bill would affect all cities and towns in the upper basin. The sponsor confirmed it would apply to any area that drains into the Great Salt Lake basin. Representative Ship asked whether the requirement applies only to future construction, and the sponsor confirmed the Bill is not retroactive. Representative Albrecht expressed support for the Bill.

An individual representing of the Jordan River Commission expressed reservations, noting that retention basins are critical to water quality and groundwater recharge. They stated that allowing water to infiltrate into the ground can benefit the Great Salt Lake by reducing evaporation and naturally filtering water and cautioned that the impacts may vary by watershed. Concerns were raised that the proposal could have detrimental effects in the Jordan River watershed, and it was suggested that the issue be studied further before implementation.

Representatives from the Utah League of Cities and Towns, along with city engineers and stormwater technicians, expressed concern about the requirement to release water “as soon as possible”, stating that it could conflict with stormwater planning and create flood risks. They emphasized the need to evaluate stormwater management systemwide and requested additional

clarification and technical guidance to ensure best practices for water release. The sponsor indicated a willingness to work with stakeholders on clarifications.

The Utah Home Builders Association spoke strongly in support of the Bill, calling it a step in the right direction. They stated that the issue has already been studied and, that while groundwater infiltration may eventually reach the Lake, experts estimate it could take up to 50 years. They expressed the view that further study is unnecessary.

Representative Dominguez asked whether there are existing retention basins ready to release water into the Great Salt Lake. The sponsor responded that such basins are widespread wherever rainwater falls and noted that approximately seven percent of rainfall is currently diverted.

Yeas: 10  
Nays: 0  
N/V: 2

**Outcome: HB 489 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**

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**Bill: HB 534 - Firearm Immunity Amendments**

Sponsor: Representative Ivory

Floor Sponsor:

**UASD Position: Support**

This Bill addresses immunity for certain firearm discharges.

Discussion: The sponsor stated that the Bill grants governmental immunity for injury or damage resulting from a firearm discharge by an individual when firearm possession is allowed on government-owned, leased, or controlled property in accordance with law, policy, or practice. The sponsor explained that the Bill creates an exception to that immunity if a governmental entity or its officers or employees affirmatively encourage or aid a firearm discharge for a non-defensive purpose. The sponsor described the Bill as an incentive for governmental entities to comply with laws that limit their ability to prohibit firearms on government property.

Representative Moss asked for an example of how the Bill would apply. The sponsor referenced a situation in St. George in which firearms were reportedly banned on walking trails, which the sponsor stated is not permitted under current state law. The sponsor explained that if security personnel unlawfully prohibit firearms and a firearm is later discharged, the governmental entity would remain immune unless security personnel instructed or encouraged the discharge of the firearm.

Representative Peck stated that the government should not be responsible for the unlawful actions of others and described the Bill as common sense. Representative Albrecht asked whether the Bill would apply to any government building. The sponsor responded that it would apply to all government buildings. No member of the public commented on the Bill.

Yeas: 11  
Nays: 0

N/V: 1

**Outcome: HB 534 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**

UNASSD