

**Bill: 2<sup>nd</sup> substitute HB 473 – Colorado River Authority Amendments**

Sponsor: Representative Chew

Floor Sponsor: Senator Hinkins

**UASD Position: Track**

This Bill addresses the Colorado River Authority of Utah.

Discussion: The sponsor explained the Bill removes the Colorado River Authority from within the Governor’s Office and moves it into the Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”). Senator Blouin questioned lines 1747–1748 regarding the elimination of the word “conserve” from the statute. Cody Stewart, representing the Colorado River Authority, clarified that conservation is inherently assumed within the Authority’s mandate to protect the Colorado River. A member of the public spoke in opposition to the Bill. The Executive Director of the DNR spoke in support of the Bill. Senator Owens questioned the fiscal note. Mr. Stewart clarified that as part of the transfer of the Colorado River Authority, the associated funding for the Authority would also be transferred. Senator Hinkins spoke in support of the Bill.

Yeas: 5

Nays: 1

N/V: 1

**Outcome: 2<sup>nd</sup> substitute HB 473 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**

---

**Bill: 3<sup>rd</sup> substitute HB 157 – Department of Natural Resources Amendments**

Sponsor: Representative Shipp

Floor Sponsor: Senator Stratton

**UASD Position: Track**

This Bill addresses provisions related to the Department of Natural Resources.

Discussion: The sponsor explained the Bill serves as the Department of Natural Resources (“DNR”) annual cleanup legislation. The Bill removes the cap on low-interest loans related to secondary water metering, modifies the composition of the Board of the Utah Geological Survey to include a groundwater expert, repeals the section specifying funding sources for the Watershed Restoration Initiative, and repeals the Alternative Energy Development Tax Credit Act. The Deputy Director of the Division of Natural Resources spoke in support of the Bill. Senator Owens expressed support. Senator Stratton questioned the scope of rulemaking authority and how coordination with the Legislature would occur. The sponsor clarified that the Bill permits other departments to exercise rulemaking authority where appropriate.

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0  
N/V: 1

**Outcome: 3<sup>rd</sup> substitute HB 157 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**

---

**Bill: 2<sup>nd</sup> substitute HB 247 – Great Salt Lake Related Amendments**

Sponsor: Representative Ward  
Floor Sponsor: Senator Sandall  
**UASD Position: Track**

This Bill addresses activities that benefit the Great Salt Lake.

Discussion: Per the sponsor's request, the Bill was not heard in the Committee today.

Yeas:  
Nays:  
N/V:

**Outcome: The Bill was not heard in the Committee.**

---

**Bill: 1<sup>st</sup> substitute HB 410 – Water Leasing Amendments**

Sponsor: Representative Koford  
Floor Sponsor: Senator Sandall  
**UASD Position: Support**

This Bill addresses leasing of water.

Discussion: The sponsor, accompanied by Hannah Freeze, Deputy Great Salt Lake Commissioner, explained that the Bill creates a state-run water leasing program designed to streamline the leasing process in a manner that is voluntary, temporary, and market-influenced, with a particular focus on supporting the Great Salt Lake. HB 410 establishes a statutory framework for leasing water for beneficial use by creating the Great Salt Lake Preservation Program and a related board to oversee and prioritize leasing efforts, and by directing the State Engineer and the Great Salt Lake Commissioner to coordinate on reviewing and approving lease applications. The Bill provides protections to ensure leased water is not diverted by intervening users, makes appropriations to the program nonlapsing, and requires reporting and rulemaking to support implementation and enforcement. It also includes sunset provisions and repeals or sunsets certain existing water-related councils and statutory provisions to consolidate and streamline water management efforts related to the Great Salt Lake. The bill carries a \$5 million fiscal note to continue funding the program and to support leasing water while it is in transit.

Senator Sandall questioned how midstream water leasing would account for differential system losses and what mechanisms exist to protect leased water. Ms. Freeze clarified that water delivery would allow for seasonal flexibility and acknowledged that some losses would occur,

but those losses would be calculated into the lease so that lessees would not be adversely affected. The State Engineer, Warren Peterson of the Utah Farm Bureau, Senator Hinkins, and many members of the public spoke in support of the Bill.

Yeas: 4

Nays: 0

N/V: 3

**Outcome: 1<sup>st</sup> substitute HB 410 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**

---

**Bill: 1<sup>st</sup> substitute SB 252 – Water Usage at State-owned Facilities Amendments**

Sponsor: Senator Pitcher

Floor Sponsor: Representative Koford

**UASD Position: Track**

This Bill addresses water use at state government facilities.

Discussion: The sponsor, accompanied by Chris Cox of the Division of Facilities Construction Management (“DFCM”), explained that the Bill requires state agencies that own or occupy state-owned facilities to implement a series of water conservation measures. The Bill updates definitions related to state government facilities and turf, limits the amount of lawn or turf on the grounds of newer facilities unless exemptions are granted, and directs agencies to reduce outdoor water use compared to 2020 levels by specified amounts. The Bill requires agencies to submit water use data to the Division of Water Resources, which must establish a uniform measurement standard and make the information publicly available. It restricts outdoor watering times, requires compliance with weekly watering guides, mandates leak detection and repair programs, and encourages the use of efficient irrigation systems and low-water landscaping. The Bill also directs the Division of Facilities Construction and Management to audit irrigation systems and authorizes rulemaking to integrate irrigation audits into existing facility reviews.

Senator Sandall questioned the 75% efficiency range and what differences it could create. Mr. Cox explained that the effect would be a more uniform distribution of water to provide equal coverage. Senator Owens asked whether similar efforts were already ongoing at DFCM. Mr. Cox clarified that, while there are existing groundskeeping mandates, the Bill would encompass those efforts in a more efficient manner. Senator Owens also questioned the fiscal note and the cost of conducting an audit. The sponsor clarified that the audit could be incorporated into other tasks the Division is already performing. Senator Sandall asked about the difference in installation costs between low-absorption turf and regular turf. It was clarified that there is no substantial cost difference. The 1<sup>st</sup> substitute was adopted by the Committee.

Yeas: 3

Nays: 1

N/V: 3

**Outcome: 1<sup>st</sup> substitute SB 252 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**

---

UNASSD