

Senate Government Operations and Political Subdivisions Committee
Prepared by the Utah Association of Special Districts
03/03/2026

Bill: 4th substitute HB 361 - Elections Provisions Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Shepherd

Floor Sponsor: Senator Winterton

UASD Position: Track; amended

This Bill amends provisions relating to elections

Discussion: The sponsor presented the 4th substitute, which was adopted by the Committee. The sponsor explained that the Bill makes several changes to election administration, including modifications intended to standardize certain election procedures and timelines, clarify county commission election provisions, and align certain statutes relating to municipalities and special districts. The Bill also converts certain statutory deadlines to business days, includes provisions intended to ensure neutrality in ballot materials, and clarifies and standardizes election noticing requirements across multiple election processes.

The sponsor explained that under the substitute the Lieutenant Governor will certify candidates for the primary election immediately after state, federal, legislative, and state school board conventions conclude, while county clerks will certify candidates for county offices and local school boards. The Bill requires a county clerk to remove a deceased voter from the voter rolls within five days after receiving notice of the voter's death. For municipalities and special districts, if a candidate filing period would otherwise end on a Friday, the filing period will instead conclude the following Monday. This change is intended to accommodate government entities that operate on a four-day, ten-hour work schedule so that an employee is not required to come into the office on a day when the office is otherwise closed. The original Bill proposed changes to special district election timing provisions. The substitute retains the current law governing those elections. The Bill also prohibits a clerk from placing the clerk's name on ballot materials that are distributed, establishes a three-day period to file an objection to a declaration of candidacy, and restores rulemaking authority to the Lieutenant Governor.

The Utah Association of County Clerks and the Utah Eagle Forum spoke in support of the Bill. One member of the public spoke in opposition to the Bill.

Yeas: 6

Nays: 0

N/V: 1

Outcome: 4th substitute HB 361 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: 1st substitute HB 328 - Water Usage Modifications

Sponsor: Representative Okerlund

Floor Sponsor: Senator McKell

UASD Position: Track

This Bill addresses the use of overhead spray irrigation to irrigate nonfunctional turf.

Discussion: The sponsor explained that the Bill defines “nonfunctional turf” and limits the use of overhead spray irrigation for that type of turf within the Great Salt Lake Basin. The sponsor stated that the Bill does not require the removal of existing landscaping and does not apply to single-family residential properties. Instead, the Bill primarily applies to new development and redevelopment and focuses on commercial, industrial, and other specified properties where turf is used primarily for aesthetic purposes rather than active use. The sponsor emphasized that the intent of the Bill is to reduce unnecessary outdoor water consumption while supporting efforts to conserve water for the Great Salt Lake and noted that the measure received unanimous support from the Executive Water Task Force.

The Utah League of Cities and Towns, Utah Water Ways, Weber Basin Water Conservancy District, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District, the Great Salt Lake Commissioner’s Office, and one member of the public spoke in support of the Bill. Two members of the public spoke in opposition to the Bill.

Yeas: 5
Nays: 1
N/V: 1

Outcome: 1st substitute HB 328 passed out of Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: 2nd substitute HB 501 - Water Modifications

Sponsor: Representative Bolinger

Floor Sponsor: Senator Sandall

UASD Position: Oppose

This Bill addresses regulation of the provision of water.

Discussion:

Yeas:
Nays:
N/V:

Outcome: 2nd substitute HB 501 was not heard in the Committee today.

Bill: 2nd substitute HB 439 - Water Planning Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Shallenberger

Floor Sponsor: Senator Stratton

UASD Position: Track

This Bill modifies provisions related to the planning of future water supply.

Discussion: The sponsor presented Senate Amendment #1, which makes technical corrections to Code references. The amendment was adopted by the Committee. The sponsor explained that the Bill requires the State Engineer to engage in rulemaking to establish standards for a written water plan and to develop those standards in coordination with counties, municipalities, and special districts. The Bill establishes a framework for determining the reasonable future water requirements of the public over a 40-year planning horizon. Beginning January 1, 2028, a county, municipality, or special district must adopt a written plan describing the public water supplier's reasonable future water needs before imposing a water exaction.

The Executive Water Task Force and the Legislative Water Development Commission expressed support for the Bill. Senator Sandall asked whether the required form and process would be simple and whether government entities would receive assistance in completing the plan. The sponsor responded that the intent is to ensure the process is straightforward and that support will be available to help entities comply. The Utah League of Cities and Towns also spoke in support of the Bill and noted that the planning requirement applies only to entities that choose to impose water exactions.

Yeas: 6
Nays: 0
N/V: 1

Outcome: 2nd substitute HB 439, as amended, passed out of Committee with a favorable recommendation.