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## **WATER FOCUS OF UTAH'S 2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

*Nearly \$500 Million in Spending Committed to Water Conservation Initiatives*

Utah's 2022 legislative session concluded on March 4 with a record number of water conservation bills and appropriations totaling nearly \$500 million in spending. Utah Governor Spencer J. Cox is expected to sign the bills into law in the next few weeks.

"Utah's population and economy are exploding but our water supply is dwindling," said Brian Steed, executive director of the Utah Department of Natural Resources. "We have to protect, conserve and develop our water. Doing nothing and running out of water isn't an option."

The bills are designed to help bolster water levels in reservoirs throughout the state by reducing demand via grass rebate programs, additional metering of secondary water and watershed enhancement efforts. Statewide water storage is at a dismal 54% of capacity.

"As one of the driest and fastest-growing states in the nation, strains on Utah's water supply threaten our ability to thrive, our recreational opportunities, our environment, and our food supply," said Brad Wilson, speaker, Utah House of Representatives. "The actions taken this legislative session to conserve, preserve, and optimize Utah's water resources reiterate our commitment to address current needs while preparing for the future."

Drought conditions are common throughout Utah, especially in the southwest section of the state. Washington County's major population centers are currently dependent on one water source that has been in a drought 16 of the last 20 years.

The Washington County Water Conservancy District (district) is working with its local municipal partners to pass additional water efficiency ordinances that will eliminate or reduce the amount of grass allowed in new construction and developing a more robust regional wastewater reuse system to help prevent approaching water supply shortages.

"We are elevating our water conservation efforts while developing the critical infrastructure our growing community will need to survive a hotter and drier climate in the future, including a wastewater reuse system that will serve our municipal customers," said Zach Renstrom, general manager of the district. "We have to plan for the future and all its uncertainties or we'll run out of water."

(more)

Included in Utah’s water conservation bills are:

<b>Bill Number</b> <b>HB = House Bill</b> <b>SB = Senate Bill</b>	<b>Summary</b>
HB 37	promotes recharge of aquifer storage
HB 39	requires more efficient plumbing fixtures in updated construction codes
HB 121	imposes water conservation requirements on state-owned facilities and provides incentives to replace grass
HB 131	creates the watershed restoration initiative
HB 168	requires the state engineer to study how use would be managed in a temporary water shortage, including the identification of preference and compensation
HB 242	requires the metering of secondary water systems
HB 282	prohibits public and private entities from prohibiting water-wise landscaping and authorizes certain landscaping requirements
HB 423	provides funding for the implementation of agricultural and water management practices that maintain or increase viable agricultural while minimizing negative impacts on water supply or quality
SB 89	modifies water conservation plan requirements
SB 110	mandates municipal general plans to address land and water use together

***About Washington County Water Conservancy District***

The Washington County Water Conservancy District is a not-for-profit public agency that oversees water resources in Washington County, UT. Visit [wcwcd.org](http://wcwcd.org) for more information.