

Stephanie Pitcher proposes the following substitute bill:

Water Usage at State-owned Facilities Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Stephanie Pitcher

House Sponsor: Jill Koford

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill addresses water use at state government facilities.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- requires a state agency to take certain actions related to irrigation and use of low-water turf;
- directs the Division of Facilities Construction and Management to audit irrigation systems;
- authorizes rulemaking; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

63A-5b-1108, as enacted by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 50

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **63A-5b-1108** is amended to read:

63A-5b-1108 . Water conservation and state government facilities.

(1) As used in this section:

- (a) "Division" means the Division of Water Resources.
- (b) "Grounds" means the real property, whether fenced or unfenced, of the parcel of land on which is located a state government facility, including a public or private driveway, street, sidewalk or walkway, parking lot, or parking garage on the property.

- 29 (c)(i) Except as provided in Subsection (1)(c)(ii), "lawn or turf" means
30 nonagricultural land planted in closely mowed, managed grasses.
- 31 (ii) "Lawn or turf" does not include a golf course, park, athletic field, or sod farm.
- 32 (d) "Reconstructed" means that a building is subject to construction that affects the
33 exterior of the building or the building's grounds.
- 34 (e)(i) "State agency" means a department, division, office, entity, agency, or other
35 unit of state government.
- 36 (ii) "State agency" includes an institution of higher education.
- 37 (f)(i) "State government facility" means a building, structure, or other improvement
38 that is constructed on property owned by the state, the state's departments,
39 commissions, institutions, or other state agency.
- 40 (ii) "State government facility" does not include:
- 41 (A) an unoccupied structure that is a component of the state highway system;
42 (B) a privately owned structure that is located on property owned by the state, the
43 state's department, commission, institution, or other state agency; or
44 (C) a structure that is located on land administered by the trust lands
45 administration under a lease, permit, or contract with the trust lands
46 administration.
- 47 (2)(a) Unless exempted under Subsection (2)(b), a state agency that owns or occupies a
48 state government facility that is built or reconstructed on or after May 4, 2022, may
49 not have more than 20% of the grounds of the state government facility be lawn or
50 turf.
- 51 (b) The division may exempt a state government facility from the restrictions of
52 Subsection (2)(a) if the division determines that the purposes of a state agency that
53 occupies the state government facility requires additional lawn or turf.
- 54 (3)(a) A state agency shall reduce the state agency's outdoor water use as compared to
55 the state agency's outdoor water use for fiscal year 2020:
- 56 (i) in an amount equal to or greater than 5% by the end of fiscal year 2023; and
57 (ii) in an amount equal to or greater than 25% by the end of fiscal year 2026.
- 58 (b) A state agency shall submit the following information to the division:
- 59 (i) by no later than October 1, 2022:
- 60 (A) the state agency's water use for fiscal year 2020; and
61 (B) the state agency's water use for fiscal year 2022;
- 62 (ii) by no later than October 1, 2023, the state agency's water use for fiscal year 2023;

- 63 and
- 64 (iii) by no later than October 1, 2026, the state agency's water use for fiscal year 2026.
- 65 (c) The division shall:
- 66 (i) post the information provided to the division under this Subsection (3) on a public
- 67 website; and
- 68 (ii) by rule, made in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative
- 69 Rulemaking Act, establish a uniform measure for purposes of this section of a
- 70 state agency's water use.
- 71 (4) Except when allowed by the division, a state agency may not water landscapes at a state
- 72 government facility between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.
- 73 (5) A state agency shall do the following at a state government facility:
- 74 (a) follow weekly lawn watering guides if issued by the division;
- 75 (b) manually shut off systems during rain and wind events if the landscape irrigation
- 76 system does not have rain and wind shutoff functions;
- 77 (c) implement a leak-detection and repair program for outdoor use;
- 78 (d) coordinate with the division to implement water efficient methods, technologies, and
- 79 practices;[~~and~~]
- 80 (e) at least annually:
- 81 (i) evaluate opportunities to update irrigation technology with devices that:
- 82 (A) meet national recognized standards for efficiency;
- 83 (B) include rain and wind shutoff functions; and
- 84 (C) include soil moisture sensors;
- 85 (ii) evaluate opportunities to:
- 86 (A) subject to Subsection (2), limit lawn or turf on the grounds of a state
- 87 government facility and replace lawn or turf with water-wise plants; and
- 88 (B) update facility-management technology to include metering for
- 89 water-consuming processes related to irrigation and mechanical systems; and
- 90 (iii) audit and repair a landscape irrigation system so that the landscape irrigation
- 91 system is operating at maximum acceptable efficiency[~~-~~] , except that for a
- 92 landscape irrigation system installed on or after May 6, 2026, the minimum
- 93 distribution uniformity of the landscape irrigation system shall equal or exceed
- 94 75%;
- 95 (f) select low-water turf grass when replacing or installing lawn or turf except that the
- 96 division may exempt a state agency from this requirement if use of low-water turf is

97 not practical due to the existing slope, erosion, stoniness, or other features of the
98 landscape; and

99 (g) work cooperatively with state institutions of higher education to use best practices
100 and the most recent technologies in landscape irrigation systems.

101 (6)(a) The Division of Facilities Construction and Management shall routinely audit
102 state government facilities to:

103 (i) document distribution uniformity at the time of the audit of a landscape irrigation
104 system; and

105 (ii) for a landscape irrigation system that does not meet or exceed 75% distribution
106 uniformity, identify and document specific action items required to achieve at
107 least 75% distribution uniformity.

108 (b) The director of the Division of Facilities Construction and Management may make
109 rules, in accordance with Title 63G, Chapter 3, Utah Administrative Rulemaking Act,
110 to incorporate an audit under this Subsection (6) with a facility condition audit
111 conducted by the Division of Facilities Construction and Management.

112 Section 2. **Effective Date.**

113 This bill takes effect on May 6, 2026.