

Bill: 1st Substitute HB 41 – State Water Policy Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Carl R. Albrecht

Floor Sponsor: Senator Scott Sandall

UASD Position: Support

This Bill amends the state water policy.

Discussion: The sponsor said that this Bill makes superficial changes to water policy. It addresses water quality in groundwater, references saved water, encourages the monitoring of watersheds in consultation with watershed councils, promotes state water planning, and accounts for regionally appropriate water reuse. The Bill was heard by the Natural Resources Interim Committee and the Executive Water Task Force. The Great Basin Water Network and the Utah Farm Bureau spoke in favor of the Bill. No further discussion or public comment ensued.

Yeas: 3

Nays: 0

N/V: 4

Outcome: 1st Substitute HB 41 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: HB 46 – Water Rights Applications Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Doug Owens

Floor Sponsor: Senator Evan Vickers

UASD Position: Support

This Bill addresses applications before the state engineer.

Discussion: The sponsor stated that this is a technical “clean-up” Bill being run at the request of the State Engineer. It addresses time frames related to reinstatement of a lapsed application. The Utah Farm Bureau spoke in favor of the Bill. No further discussion or public comment ensued.

Yeas: 3

Nays: 0

N/V: 4

Outcome: HB 46 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.

Bill: HB 47 – Public Lands Watering Rights Amendments

Sponsor: Representative Carl Albrecht

Floor Sponsor: Senator Dennis Owens

UASD Position: Support

This Bill addresses livestock watering rights on public lands.

Discussion: Representative Albrecht explained that this Bill is rooted in Executive Order 107 from 1926, which established a public water reserve and has since caused issues for grazers on public lands. According to the sponsor, the Bill repeals provisions related to livestock water use certificates, clarifies how federal land management agencies handle reductions in livestock grazing animal unit months, and addresses claims under Public Water Reserve No. 107. The sponsor emphasized that the Bill aims to “push back” on the Bureau of Land Management (“BLM”) and restore rights to grazers. Teresa Wilhelmsen, the State Engineer, the Utah Farm Bureau, the Public Lands Policy Coordinating Office, and the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food also spoke in support. No further discussion ensued.

Yeas: 3
Nays: 0
N/V: 4

Outcome: HB 47 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.