

**Bill: HB 243 – Agricultural Water Optimization Amendments**

Sponsor: Representative David Shallenberger

Floor Sponsor:

**UASD Position: Support**

This Bill addresses agricultural water optimization.

Discussion: Representative Shallenberger opened his presentation with a story about a friend working with John Deere, who developed automation technology that reduces pesticide use by spot-treating individual plants. He suggested that similar technology could be applied to optimize water usage in agriculture. The sponsor explained that this Bill leverages existing grant funds to help ranchers adopt water optimization technology, using data to improve crop irrigation while promoting sustainable practices. Representative Koford inquired about the reporting requirements, and the sponsor pointed to the details on line 115. Craig Buttars, Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Food, and one member of the public spoke in support of the Bill. No further discussion followed.

Yeas: 11

Nays: 0

N/V: 3

**Outcome: HB 243 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**

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**Bill: 1st substitute HB 147 – Aquatic Invasive Species Amendments**

Sponsor: Representative Rex P. Shipp

Floor Sponsor:

**UASD Position: Tracking**

This Bill addresses requirements to operate or launch a vessel.

Discussion: Representative Shipp spoke to the 1st substitute, which had been previously adopted. He explained that Lake Powell faces issues with aquatic invasive species and spoke to the established process for boaters to mitigate these risks. This Bill exempts inflatable watercraft users from the education requirement and associated sticker fee.

Representative Chew raised a question about line 240, expressing concern that the language seemed contradictory to the Bill's intent and questioned why government agencies were excluded. The sponsor responded, noting that agency boats were already aware of the rules and properly maintained. He emphasized that the Bill specifically targets inflatable watercraft, which he believes pose minimal risk when moving between bodies of water. Representative Koford asked for clarification on whether the fee was waived for state agencies. The sponsor confirmed that it was, although state agencies are still required to maintain and clean their watercraft. No further discussion or public comment followed.

Yeas: 8  
Nays: 0  
N/V: 6

**Outcome: 1st substitute HB 147 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**

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**Bill: HB 415 – Water Commissioner Modifications**

Sponsor: Representative Thomas W. Peterson

Floor Sponsor:

**UASD Position: Support**

This Bill clarifies employment provisions for water commissioners.

Discussion: Representative Peterson explained that this Bill makes the 34 water commissioners in the state eligible for health and retirement benefits. It is permissive and not mandatory. He noted that the Bill aims to give local entities flexibility to negotiate how water commissioners prefer to be compensated.

Representative Shipp asked about lines 41-42, questioning whether full time water commissioners would be eligible for benefits. Teresa Wilhelmsen, the State Engineer, clarified that part time commissioners are already addressed, and the Bill specifically resolves issues with full time employee compensation through the Department of Human Resource Management. Representative Chew inquired whether this would affect annual or ditch assessments, and Ms. Wilhelmsen confirmed it would not. The Utah Farm Bureau spoke in favor of the Bill, and no further discussion ensued.

Yeas: 7  
Nays: 0  
N/V: 7

**Outcome: HB 415 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**

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**Bill: 1st substitute SB 36 – Water Quality Board Amendments**

Sponsor: Senator Todd D. Weiler

Floor Sponsor: Representative Paul A. Cutler

**UASD Position: Support**

This Bill addresses the Utah Water Quality Board.

Discussion: Senator Weiler presented the Bill. He explained that a sewer district in his area had been fined and found the penalty excessively high, with limited options to negotiate. The previously adopted 1st substitute creates a process where, under certain conditions, if the proposed penalty exceeds \$25,000, four board members of the Utah Water Quality Board can mediate between the penalized party and the Director of the Division of Water Quality to reach a settlement. The sponsor emphasized that while penalized parties may still go to court, but the

Bill establishes an alternative process for resolving these fines. Representative Albrecht voiced his support for the Bill. No further discussion or public comment followed.

Yeas: 8

Nays: 0

N/V: 6

**Outcome: 1st substitute SB 36 passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.**

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