

February 2023

UTAH LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

The Weekly Legislative Session Newsletter of RRJ Consulting
Utah's Leading Lobbying Firm



WEEK THREE

Week three of the 2023 General Legislative Session has come to an end. The House and the Senate began morning and afternoon floor debates and appropriation committees are finalizing prioritized lists. We are following along closely as Senate and House members propose, debate, and pass policies that will impact our clients and the people of Utah. We're grateful for and appreciate your trust!

VETERANS TRIBUTE

This week, veterans from wars of the past joined lawmakers and the governor. Clint Romesha, Medal of Honor Recipient, and decorated veterans were honored on the House and Senate chambers.

We thank each of them for their sacrifice.

BASE BUDGETS

One of the first significant actions in the budgeting process is the passage of the base budgets. A practice that is only a few decades old, the base budget process is done to ensure that government services will remain open if, for any reason, the legislature and the governor disagree on the final budget.

Each appropriation subcommittee will submit a base budget which is essentially last year's budget for the administration of each state department. The whole legislature will vote on the eight base budgets and send those to the governor's desk to sign.

Governor Cox signed the eight bills this past week.

POLICY HIGHLIGHT

WATER APPROPRIATIONS AND POLICY

Water Week

Week 3 at the Utah legislature brought us the first annual Water Week. A week where lawmakers were hyper-focused on water policy and appropriations. Many bills and requests were debated, and we expect more to come in the following weeks as water is one of the hottest topics on the hill.

Water Week involved multiple bills addressing a wide range of issues related to water, injecting millions into conservation efforts like turf-removal programs and rebates for agricultural operations to improve their monitoring and efficiency. Funding would also be set aside to try and preserve the Great Salt Lake, which fell again to record lows in 2022.

Last year lawmakers appropriated over \$500 million dollars of both state and federal funds to critical conservation measures in the midst of a drought. Leaders have signaled they will do that and more this year to prepare and mitigate the risk of water shortage and growth.

Governor Cox joined in the week by releasing an Executive Order on Friday afternoon to raise the Great Salt Lake Causeway Berm another five feet to allow the state to move quickly to increase the lake level in the South Arm by capturing spring runoff.

RRJ has represented Prepare60 for the last several years. Prepare60 educates Utah legislators and elected city and county officials on critical matters regarding the future of Utah's water through workshops, publications, classes, and consultations. We are supportive of the focus and dedication to this critical issue for the future of our state.

