

February 2023

# UTAH LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

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



## WEEK SIX

We've made it to the final week of the legislative session. Only one more committee hearing for each subcommittee remains, and many hours and late nights as lawmakers debate final bills on the floor. Thank you for following along with us this session as we recap each week.

## RECORD SNOW FALL

We get approximately 95% of our water from snowpack. Reservoir storage is dependent upon snowpack and runoff to get us through dry years. Extended drought has depleted our reservoirs, and it will take multiple years of above-average snowpack and precipitation to reverse drought impacts. Utah's snowpack is currently above average for this time of year and is higher than our median peak last year. Typically, our snowpack peaks around April, with a 30-year median of 15.8 inches. This year, we reached 80% snowpack before mid-January.

## PAMELA ATKINSON DAY

Pamela Atkinson has devoted her life to caring for and helping Utahns experiencing poverty and homelessness.

At the Capitol on Friday, surrounded by her friends and family and legislative, church, and business leaders, Gov. Spencer Cox declared Feb. 24 as Pamela Atkinson Day to recognize her longtime service in Utah.

## ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF THE INVASION OF UKRAINE

Friday, February 24th, marked the one-year anniversary of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Lawmakers honored the day by having a moment of silence and wearing Utah-shaped blue and yellow lapel pins in honor.

# POLICY HIGHLIGHT

## FINAL BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS

The Executive Appropriations Committee released the final appropriations list Friday evening to set Utah's roughly \$28 billion total budget — the largest in state history — for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The list's \$5.1 billion in appropriations includes over \$1.1 billion in ongoing spending and \$4 billion in one-time funding. The recommendations now go to the full Legislature, which is expected to fine-tune and ultimately approve the budget in the final days of the session scheduled to end on March 3.

Here are some of the most noteworthy funding highlights:

### Water

- Nearly \$500m in water conservation and projects, including agriculture optimization, dam safety, the Great Salt Lake and Utah Lake, and water reuse projects in Southern Utah.

### Public Education

- Public education will be the largest increase in state history, with over a 20% increase from last year. Items include teacher salary increases, a 6% increase in the WPU, and over \$300m for Teacher Prep days, teen centers, all-day kindergarten options, and capital needs.

### Transportation

- Over \$1b investment in transportation and transit projects statewide.

### Housing and Homelessness

- Approximately \$250m on housing and homelessness programs.

