

WATER CONSERVATION POLICY BRIEF: SECONDARY METERING AND NEXT STEPS

Background:

Secondary metering has been a common conservation method utilized by water suppliers and municipalities across the State. These locally driven metering projects have a proven record of reducing secondary water use and slowing the need for additional water infrastructure¹. In a 2015 legislative audit of the Utah Division of Water Resources, the auditors concluded that to improve conservation and data collection, the State should require metering for all secondary water systems². In 2016, the Legislature passed S.C.R. 1, encouraging water suppliers to meter all retail public and private water systems. In 2018, Senator Jake Anderegg introduced S.B. 204, which would have required suppliers of secondary water with more than 500 connections to meter all connections before 2026. This bill failed to pass out of the Senate, largely based on the massive fiscal note.

2019 Legislative Session:

In the 2019 legislative session, Senator Anderegg introduced S.B. 52, requiring institutional and residential pressurized secondary water systems to meter all users by 2030. The original bill provided for a loan program of up to 50% of the cost and a grant program for up to 16.5%. Even with some funding the overall fiscal impact to water suppliers neared \$290 million. Through the legislative session, multiple substitutes were drafted to address concerns raised by ULCT staff and its membership. Some of these changes included excluding water suppliers in counties of the 3rd through 6th classes, allowing exemptions for water suppliers who could not obtain warrantied meters (due to the water quality), water suppliers who demonstrate recharge impacts, accounting for greenbelt status, extending the window to 2039, and even increasing the grant amount to 50% of the total cost. However, none of these versions managed to pass out of the Senate.

S.B. 52 5th Substitute:

At a presentation to the Rural Water Users on March 25, 2019, Senator Anderegg stated his caucus did not support providing a subsidy for secondary metering because it set a precedent for funding local projects. This was reflective of the 5th substitute of SB 52, which was passed by the Legislature. Key components of the bill are:

- Requires any NEW systems to meter starting April 1, 2020
- Requires secondary water suppliers to develop plans by December 2019 on how to add meters for existing users
 - Plans should include: cost, timeline to complete metering, and financing options
 - The Dept. of Water Resources will release a template/brochure on developing these plans by June
- Sends this issue to the Utah Water Task Force (Water experts and water providers that review and make recommendations on water policy) for review and recommendations on:
 - Need for exemptions, funding resources, and other impacts
- Increases annual reporting on secondary providers
 - Connection types (commercial, industrial, residential)

¹ http://www.hansenallenluce.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/secondary_water_meters_saratoga_springs.pdf
https://assets.noviams.com/novi-file-uploads/rwau/SecondaryIrrigationForum/WBWCD_Secondary_Metering.pdf

² https://assets.noviams.com/novi-file-uploads/rwau/SecondaryIrrigationForum/SecondaryWaterMetering_RWAU_2019_Candice_Hasenyager.pdf

- Months of service
- Volume of water
- Permits loans for secondary water of up to \$10 million annually

Next steps:

Over the summer ULCT staff will be gathering data and information to help inform the Utah Water Task Force of the challenges and impacts of secondary metering. Please come prepared to discuss specific challenges to add secondary metering and alternative methods of conservation your municipality has implemented. Including what your community is doing to conserve water.