



2024 Legislative Affairs Priorities

WATER CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

Position Statement

ChamberWest believes that as a finite resource, the value of water in economic development, support of life and increasing growth cannot be overstated. Water demand continues to increase as population and business sectors grow. Because our economy relies on water, any disruption of water quality or water service would harm business and economic development. The water industry is facing some tremendous challenges, mandates, and costs. Continued requirements from EPA, Division of Drinking Water, other regulatory agencies and even security sectors continue to increase needs for funding, research, and improvements, which are constant and expensive.

1) Promote efficient water use and conservation

Our most vital natural resource must be used efficiently before pursuing additional development. More than 60% of our water is applied to outdoor landscaping. Conservation efforts must be our priority in ensuring we have a reliable water supply. ChamberWest endorses the use of wise watering practices, continued implementation of water conservation measures, and adoption of water-efficient landscaping standards for attaining these goals. We urge and support the adoption of water efficiency standards for all new construction to reduce the overall cost of water, limit excessive use and provide long-term reliable water supply.

2) Support integration of land use and water planning

For a secure water future, considerations for water stewardship, supply, quality, and use must be integrated into community planning and development. Every land use decision is a water management decision. ChamberWest supports efforts to bring planning departments, water providers, and end users together to share key planning information and provide feedback on long-term plans and development proposals.

3) Support for long-term water development projects

Current water sources available for our growing cities will not be sufficient to satisfy fast-growing demands, even after significant conservation progress is achieved. Land development trends will determine how quickly our sources will be used at capacity. New, imported supplies will eventually be necessary to meet growing demand. Large water importation projects require decades to plan, design, permit, finance, and construct. ChamberWest supports the planning of new water importation projects to provide for development in the future time of need. Since the majority of water sources in the state are used for agricultural purposes, ChamberWest supports a collaborative effort between all water users to identify additional sources that may be used for new urban and business water needs.

4) Protect water funding mechanisms

Water providers in the ChamberWest area use the three principal funding mechanisms which have been used for decades to operate existing systems and build new water projects: user charges (water rates), impact fees, and property taxes. ChamberWest supports the ongoing protection and use of these three revenue sources in order to provide sufficient water supplies and infrastructure for the future. Changes to this funding model could weaken Utah's economic development and its ability to provide clean, safe water for future generations.

ChamberWest

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5) **Statewide water development financing**

The four largest water conservancy districts of the state created the Statewide Water Infrastructure Plan (SWIP) which projects population growth, M&I water demand, and water conservation and infrastructure needs through 2070 at a combined cost of \$38.1 billion. As federal financing for state water projects no longer exists, ChamberWest supports financing for future state water projects and repair/replacement of federal water infrastructure through the state Water Infrastructure Restricted Account (WIRA) and existing state water revolving loan funds. ChamberWest also supports improved water use data reporting, studies of reasonable new targets for conservation, and development of reasonable guidelines for repayment contracts.

6) **A Healthy Great Salt Lake**

One of the detrimental results of the years of extreme drought in the Western United States has been the toll on the waters of the Great Salt Lake. The receding waters of the Lake have reached historic lows. ChamberWest recognizes the importance of the Lake to industries directly utilizing Lake resources, in enhancing snowpack conditions, and in maintaining healthy air quality standards along the Wasatch Front. ChamberWest supports efforts for a healthy Great Salt Lake while continuing to provide for existing and planned future M&I water resources vital to economic sustainability and growth of the Salt Lake Valley.

Subcommittee Members

Mark Chalk, Taylorsville Bennion Improvement District, Chair
F. Greg Anderson, Kearns Improvement District, Vice Chair
Alan Packard, Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District

Jason Helm, Granger-Hunter Improvement District
Jason Shurtleff, Zions Bank
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