



2025 Legislative Affairs Priorities

PUBLIC UTILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE

Position Statement

ChamberWest believes that public utilities, including water, sewer, power, cable/fiber, and natural gas—provide essential and finite resources whose value in economic development, support of life, and increasing growth cannot be overstated. Demand for these utilities continues to increase as population and business sectors grow. Because our economy relies on these essential services, any disruption in quality or service would harm business and economic development. With ongoing challenges, regulatory mandates, and the need for constant improvements, each of these sectors faces significant financial and operational pressures. ChamberWest supports initiatives to address these needs through efficient use, planning, funding, and development across all these essential industries.

1) Promote Efficient Use and Conservation of Resources

Our most vital resources must be used efficiently before pursuing additional development. Whether it be water, energy, gas, or any other public utility with finite resources, conservation efforts must be prioritized to ensure reliable supplies. ChamberWest endorses wise utility usage practices and supports the implementation of conservation measures for water, energy, and gas resources. Adoption of efficiency standards for all new construction, whether it's for water use, or energy and gas consumption, it is crucial to reduce overall costs, limit excessive use, and provide long-term reliable access to these essential services.

2) Support Integration of Land Use and Utility Planning

For a secure future in public utilities, considerations for stewardship, supply, quality, and use must be integrated into community planning and development. Every land use decision is a utility management decision. ChamberWest supports efforts to bring planning departments, utility providers, and end users together to share key planning information and provide feedback on long-term plans and development proposals. This will ensure that utilities such as water, sewer, gas, power, and communication networks are adequately prepared to meet future demands.

3) Support Long-Term Utility Development Projects

Current sources available for public utilities, such as water, energy, and digital infrastructure, will not be sufficient to satisfy fast-growing demands, even after significant conservation progress is achieved. Development trends will determine how quickly existing resources are used at capacity. New sources or upgraded systems will eventually be necessary to meet growing demand. Large-scale projects in all utility sectors—whether it's water importation, power generation, or broadband expansion—require decades to plan, design, permit, finance, and construct. ChamberWest supports the planning of new projects in water, energy, and broadband to provide for development in future times of need.

4) Protect Utility Funding Mechanisms

Utility providers in the ChamberWest area use several principal funding mechanisms, such as user charges (rates), impact fees, property taxes, and bonding, to operate existing systems and build new infrastructure. ChamberWest supports the ongoing protection and use of these revenue sources to provide sufficient resources and infrastructure for the future. Changes to this funding model could weaken the region's

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economic development and its ability to provide essential services like clean water, reliable energy, and modern communication networks for future generations.

5) Maintain Healthy Natural and Environmental Resources

The impact of environmental factors, such as drought, on natural resources—whether it's water in reservoirs or renewable energy sources—cannot be ignored. For example, the receding waters of the Great Salt Lake have reached historic lows, directly affecting industries, air quality, and energy production. ChamberWest recognizes the importance of maintaining healthy ecosystems and supports efforts to balance environmental sustainability with the need to provide vital utility resources like water, energy, and natural gas that are essential to the region's economic growth.

6) Industry Specific Priorities

6.1) Electrical Utility Objectives and Priorities

The abundance of reliable and affordable electricity is a key to sustainable economic growth and development in the ChamberWest area. Legislative policy should support the following objectives: wildfire mitigation planning that acknowledges increased risk and incidence of wildfires in the West and Intermountain West and provides for funding mechanisms to recover investments in upgraded infrastructure and increasing liability costs; ability to manage capacity for new load requests including generation and transmission investment and rate recovery that provides balanced rate impacts and risk management among utility stakeholders, existing ratepayers, and new applicants; support for investments in diversity of electricity transmission and generation resources that provide long-term reliability, affordability, and sustainability.

6.2) 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.

Subcommittee Members

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Jason Helm, Granger-Hunter Improvement District

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