***Effective 3/16/2018***
# Part 2
# Agricultural Water Optimization

**73-10g-201 Title.**
  This part is known as "Agricultural Water Optimization."

Enacted by Chapter 143, 2018 General Session

**73-10g-202 Agricultural Water Optimization Task Force.**
(1) There is created the Agricultural Water Optimization Task Force, consisting of:
  (a) the following voting members:
    (i) one individual representing the Department of Agriculture and Food;
    (ii) one individual representing the board or division;
    (iii) one individual representing the Division of Water Rights;
    (iv) one individual representing the Division of Water Quality;
    (v) one individual representing the interests of the agriculture industry;
    (vi) one individual representing environmental interests;
    (vii) one individual representing water conservancy districts; and
    (viii) three individuals whose primary source of income comes from the production of
        agricultural commodities; and
  (b) one nonvoting member from the higher education community with a background in research.
(2)
  (a) The commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Food shall appoint the members
      described in Subsections (1)(a)(i), (v), (vii), and (viii).
  (b) The executive director of the Department of Natural Resources shall appoint the members
      described in Subsections (1)(a)(ii), (iii), and (vi).
  (c) The governor shall appoint the members described in Subsections (1)(a)(iv) and (1)(b).
(3) The division shall provide administrative support to the task force.
(4) The task force shall select a chair from among its membership.
(5) Six voting members present constitutes a quorum of the task force.  Action by a majority of
    voting members when a quorum is present is an action of the task force.
(6) Service on the task force is voluntary and a member may not receive compensation or benefits
    for the member's service, but may receive per diem and travel expenses in accordance with:
  (a) Section 63A-3-106;
  (b) Section 63A-3-107; and
  (c) rules made by the Division of Finance pursuant to Sections 63A-3-106 and 63A-3-107.

Amended by Chapter 4, 2020 Special Session 5

**73-10g-203 Duties of the task force.**
(1) The task force created in Section 73-10g-202 shall:
  (a) identify critical issues facing the state's long-term water supply, particularly in regard to how
      the state should optimize agricultural water supply and use in light of future population growth,
      and the future water needs of Utah agriculture;

(b) identify current obstacles to, and constraints upon, quantification of agricultural water use, and recommend means, methods, technologies, or other opportunities to improve the quantification of agricultural water use on a basin level; and

(c) identify means, methods, systems, or technologies with the potential to maintain or increase agricultural production while reducing the agriculture industry's water diversion and consumption.

(2) The task force shall issue requests for proposals and award grants to study the issues identified in Subsection (1), prioritizing proposals and grants as necessary.

(3) In identifying critical issues as described in Subsection (1), and prioritizing requests for proposals and grants as described in Subsection (2), the task force shall:

(a) identify, develop, and apply sound science and relevant research on optimizing agricultural water use;

(b) measure gains at the basin level;

(c) take into account the variety of agricultural products, opportunities to improve water use practices, and local needs;

(d) address and account for farm economics at the enterprise and community level;

(e) work within existing agricultural markets or encourage market behavior that financially rewards improved practices;

(f) recognize established water rights;

(g) create meaningful benefits for farmers to optimize water use and protect water quality;

(h) monitor funded research projects and evaluate the efficacy of completed research; and

(i) disseminate research findings.

(4) The task force shall report on the task force's progress under this section by November 30, of each year, to:

(a) the Legislative Water Development Commission;

(b) the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee; and

(c) the Utah Water Task Force within the Department of Natural Resources.

(5) As part of the report required by Subsection (4), and based on the information acquired under Subsections (1) through (3), the task force shall recommend legislation, if any, that addresses the issues listed in Subsection (3).

Amended by Chapter 33, 2020 General Session

**73-10g-204 Agricultural Water Optimization Account.**

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Account" means the Agricultural Water Optimization Account created in Subsection (2).

(b) "Agricultural water optimization" means the implementation of agricultural and water management practices that maintain or increase viable agriculture while minimizing negative impacts on water supply, water quality, and the environment.

(c) "Department" means the Department of Agriculture and Food.

(2) There is created a restricted account within the General Fund called the Agricultural Water Optimization Account.

(3) The account consists of:

(a) appropriations from the Legislature;

(b) federal funds; and

(c) grants or donations from other public or private sources.

(4) Subject to appropriation, the department may use money in the account to issue grants to improve agricultural water optimization.

(5) Until December 31, 2024, the department may loan up to $3,000,000 of General Fund money in the account to the Agriculture Resource Development Fund, subject to the conditions described in Section 4-18-106.
(6)
  (a) The department shall maintain the Agriculture Water Optimization Account and record all debits and credits made to the account by the department.
  (b) The Office of the Treasurer shall deposit interest and other earnings derived from investment of money in the Agriculture Water Optimization Account into the account.

Amended by Chapter 79, 2022 General Session