



**Department of
Environmental Quality**

Division of
Water Quality

Utah 2026 Triennial Review

R317-2 Standards of Quality for Waters of the State

PREPARED BY

Jake Vander Laan, Water Quality Standards Coordinator

Ben Holcomb, Standards and Technical Services Section Manager

Summary

To meet obligations under the Clean Water Act and Utah Water Quality Act, the Utah Division of Water Quality (DWQ) is required to review [Utah's Water Quality Standards in Utah Administrative Code R317-2](#) at least once every three years (R317-2-1C & [40 CFR 131.20\(a\)](#)).

R317-2-1C. Triennial Review requirements

“The water quality standards shall be reviewed and updated, if necessary, at least once every three years. The Director will seek input through a cooperative process from stakeholders representing state and federal agencies, various interest groups, and the public to develop a preliminary draft of changes. Proposed changes will be presented to the Water Quality Board for information. Informal public meetings may be held to present preliminary proposed changes to the public for comments and suggestions. Final proposed changes will be presented to the Water Quality Board for approval and authorization to initiate formal rulemaking. Public hearings will be held to solicit formal comments from the public. The Director will incorporate appropriate changes and return to the Water Quality Board to petition for formal adoption of the proposed changes following the requirements of the Utah Rulemaking Act, Title 63G, Chapter 3.”

For the 2026 Triennial Review, DWQ has performed a comprehensive review of all of Utah's water quality standards policies and criteria, including a comparison of the state's water quality standards to nationally recommended criteria to identify and prioritize needed additions and updates.

DWQ is now seeking input through a collaborative engagement process with stakeholders, partner state and federal agencies, and the public to identify any additional recommended changes to Utah's water quality standards.



2026 Triennial Review

Water Quality Standards Priority List

DWQ's water quality standards priority list includes short-term goals for water quality standards amendments, interim goals to support future water quality standards changes, and long-term priorities. DWQ routinely updates water quality standards priorities in response to the state's needs, emerging water quality issues, and other relevant considerations. This list represents a snapshot of active priorities. The order of the items in the list does not represent a rank order of priorities.

Standards Issue	Background	Goal
Table reformatting and nonsubstantive edits	Text based tables must be converted to word processing style tables. These changes are nonsubstantive. Reformatting should make Utah's WQ standards easier to interpret, use, and update. DWQ will also make other nonsubstantive improvements such as fixing typos and improving consistency and clarity.	Complete reformatting and nonsubstantive rule changes.
Review and reclassify 2B waters with current, existing, or desired 2A uses.	Several waterbodies currently classified as 2B (infrequent primary contact) have been identified as potentially having existing 2A uses currently occurring or as a desired use for the waterbody. DWQ should identify, document, and reclassify these waters as appropriate.	Identify waters to reclassify from 2B to 2A. Finalize support document. Propose and adopt reclassifications.
EPA 2019 Cyanotoxins: microcystin & cylindrospermopsin	Nationally recommended human health recreational criteria should be adopted for recreational uses in table 2.14.1. The recommended criteria are consistent with cyanotoxin concentrations used in recreational health advisories and WQ assessment methods.	Finalize support document. Propose and adopt criteria.
EPA 2016 Selenium Criteria	The 2016 EPA criteria is hierarchical with the fish tissue criteria superseding water column criteria. The water criteria are more stringent than Utah's current criteria and selenium is common in Utah surface and waste waters. More stringent selenium criteria will impact existing discharge permits that may require	Finalize support document including permit impact evaluation, recommendations for developing site-specific translators, and evaluation of fish tissue and water Se data. Propose and adopt criteria.



	changes to treatment processes. The most sensitive species in the recommended criteria is the white sturgeon, which is not a resident taxon in Utah. DWQ expects to derive Utah-specific criteria via the species deletion and criterion recalculation procedures.	
EPA 2013 Ammonia Criteria	The 2013 EPA criteria are more stringent than Utah's current criteria if unionid mussels are present. Utah has 2 unionid species but toxicity tests weren't available for these specific species when EPA updated the criteria. Testing was recently conducted for these 2 species in California. Recalculating the 2013 EPA criteria using the California toxicity data results in unionids-present criteria for Utah that are similar to Utah's existing criteria.	Update implementation guidance, request cost analysis from affected facilities, propose criteria to the Water Quality Board, adopt and submit for EPA approval.
Human health criteria	DWQ identified unadopted 304(a) recommended human health criteria (HHC) for five parameters: • Chlorophenoxy Herbicide (2,4,5-TP) [Silvex] (CAS ID 93-72-1), • Chlorophenoxy Herbicide (2,4-D) (CAS ID 94-75-7), • Nitrosodibutylamine (CAS ID 924-16-3), • 1,2,4,5-Tetrachlorobenzene (CAS ID 95-94-3), and • Nitrosamines The recommended HHC for these parameters were proposed for adoption to the WQ Board (2017-2018), but were apparently inadvertently omitted from the rule filing.	Draft support document. Adopt recommended HHC.
Chloride	DWQ identified an unadopted 304(a) recommended chloride criterion for aquatic life. Adoption of the chloride criterion may also require adoption of site-specific chloride criteria where site-specific criteria for TDS have been derived or some other action.	Review recommended criterion, perform initial scoping, draft support document.
Great Salt Lake: Gilbert Bay	Chronic and acute toxicity tests have been conducted for brine shrimp and brine flies for arsenic, copper, lead, and zinc.	Summarize toxicity test results and determine next steps. Update the Great Salt Lake Strategy.



Great Salt Lake: Farmington and Bear River Bays	Additional biological surveys have been conducted in Farmington and Bear River Bays of Great Salt Lake, filling data gaps identified in the GSL Aquatic Life Use survey. Recently updated recommended criteria for aluminum, ammonia, selenium, and copper provide appropriate species toxicity information for a recalculation procedure. This information is also available for total residual chlorine (TRC). Combined, these factors provide a potential pathway for adopting recalculated criteria for freshwater and less saline portions of GSL.	Update the Great Salt Lake Strategy. Pilot the species deletion procedure.
2024 PFAS aquatic life criteria	National recommendations finalized for PFOS and PFOA . Both are multipart criteria including water, invertebrate tissue, and fish tissue components.	Perform detailed review. Conduct water and tissue sampling.
EPA 2021 Lakes & Reservoirs Nutrient Criteria	Pilot model application to selected lakes and reservoirs. Current candidates are Willard Bay Reservoir, Mantua Reservoir, and Deer Creek Reservoir. These would help evaluate existing endpoints, potential point sources, and potential criteria endpoints.	Perform pilot analyses.

Table 1 – 2026 Triennial Review water quality standards priority list.

