

Federal, State, and Local Water-Wise Land Use Policy Resources

Last updated 10/22/25

Federal Water Wise Policy Resources

- EPA WaterSense: <https://www.epa.gov/watersense>
- Energy Star: <https://www.energystar.gov/>

State Water Wise Policy Resources

- WRA's State Water Policy & Program Database: <https://westernresourceadvocates.org/we-save-water-and-protect-rivers/state-water-policy-database/>
- AWE's State Scorecard: <https://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/2022Scorecard>
- EPA's Maps of States with Water Reuse Regulations or Guidelines: <https://www.epa.gov/waterreuse/maps-states-water-reuse-regulations-or-guidelines>
- Non-functional turf policies 2023 Report: https://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/sites/default/files/assets/NFT%202023%20Summary%20of%20Programs%20and%20Policies%20Final%20Report_0.pdf;
 - Non-Functional Turf Bans in Nevada, Colorado, California, and Utah, as well as in municipalities across the western U.S.
- State Fixture and Appliance Requirements: <https://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/resources/topic/state-fixture-standards-matrix>
- HOA Water-Wise Landscape Restrictions:
 - TX House Bill 517: prohibits HOAs from fining homeowners for brown lawns during local watering restrictions, bans mandatory turf installation, & prohibits restrictions on drought-resistant landscaping or rainwater harvesting
 - Similar bills adopted across the Western U.S.
- Landscape and irrigation contractor licensing
 - Requirements in CA, NV, and UT (and in Castle Rock, CO)
 - [“Exploring Policy Options for Expanding Landscape & Irrigation Professional Certification in Colorado”](#) by Western Resource Advocates
 - QWEL training for landscapers: <https://www.qwel.net/>
- Water efficiency in general plans
 - Requirements in CO, UT, and AZ
- IAMPO's Water Demand Calculator: <https://www.iapmo.org/water-demand-calculator/>
 - Used in Phoenix, AZ; Castle Rock, CO; Seattle, WA

Local Water Wise Policy Resources

- Growing Water Smart Guidebooks: <https://resilientwest.org/growing-water-smart/>
- Integrating Water Efficiency Into Land Use Planning in the Interior West: A Guidebook for Local Planners: <https://westernresourceadvocates.org/publications/integrating-water-efficiency-into-land-use-planning/>
- Water Wise: Strategies for Drought-Resilient Development: <https://knowledge.uli.org/reports/research-reports/2022/water-wise>
- Example: [2022 Denver Green Code](#)

Enforcement

- Proposal from the AWWA TEC proposal on enforcement mechanisms. A contractor has been hired and this work should be done by December 2024:
<https://www.awwa.org/Portals/0/AWWA/ETS/Request%20for%20Proposals/2024%20TEC%20RFP%20Investigating%20Current%20Enforcement%20Mechanisms%20in%20Water%20Utility%20Policies%20Beyond%20Local%20Ordinances.pdf?ver=2024-01-05-193415-940>

Policy Technical Assistance/Rating Systems

- Growing Water Smart Workshops: <https://sonoraninstitute.org/resource/growing-water-smart-rfp/>
- State policies: Reach out to Alliance for Water Efficiency
- HERS H2O (RESNET) Rating System for New Construction: <https://www.resnet.us/about/hersh2o/>
- WERS Rating System for New Construction: <https://www.wers.us/>
- EPA WaterSense Labeled Homes and Communities:
<https://www.epa.gov/watersense/watersense-labeled-homes>
 - “WaterSense Labeled Homes Communities Save Energy and Support Decarbonization”:
<https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-03/ws-labeled-homes-menifee-communities-case-study.pdf>

Incentives: funding & support for water-wise land use

- Denver Water: Water Efficient System Development Program (“tap fee credit”):
<https://www.denverwater.org/contractors/construction-information/system-development-charges>
- Southern Nevada Water Authority’s (SNWA) Water Smart Landscape rebate program:
<https://www.cityofhenderson.com/government/departments/utility-services/water-conservation/rebate-programs>
- Utah’s Water Savers ("Flip the Strip") program and incentives:
<https://www.utahwatersavers.com/>