

**COURT FEE MODIFICATIONS**

2023 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Kay J. Christofferson**

Senate Sponsor: Curtis S. Bramble

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**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This bill addresses court fees.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

This bill:

- ▶ defines terms related to fees;
- ▶ requires the Judicial Council to provide a report on fees to the Legislature; and
- ▶ makes technical and conforming changes.

**Money Appropriated in this Bill:**

None

**Other Special Clauses:**

None

**Utah Code Sections Affected:**

AMENDS:

**63J-1-504**, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2022, Chapter 73

ENACTS:

**78A-2-310**, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

Section 1. Section **63J-1-504** is amended to read:

**63J-1-504. Fees -- Adoption, procedure, and approval -- Establishing and assessing fees without legislative approval -- Report summarizing fees.**

(1) As used in this section:

30 (a) (i) "Agency" means each department, commission, board, council, agency,  
31 institution, officer, corporation, fund, division, office, committee, authority, laboratory, library,  
32 unit, bureau, panel, or other administrative unit of the state.

33 (ii) "Agency" does not include:

34 (A) the Legislature or a committee or staff office of the Legislature[-]; or

35 (B) the Judiciary, as that term is defined in Section [78A-2-310](#).

36 (b) "Agency's cost" means all of a fee agency's direct and indirect costs and expenses  
37 for providing the goods or service for which the fee agency charges a fee or for regulating the  
38 industry in which the persons paying the fee operate, including:

39 (i) salaries, benefits, contracted labor costs, travel expenses, training expenses,  
40 equipment and material costs, depreciation expense, utility costs, and other overhead costs; and

41 (ii) costs and expenses for administering the fee.

42 (c) "Fee agency" means an agency that is authorized to establish and charge a service  
43 fee or a regulatory fee.

44 (d) "Fee schedule" means the complete list of service fees and regulatory fees charged  
45 by a fee agency and the amount of those fees.

46 (e) "Regulatory fee" means a fee that a fee agency charges to cover the agency's cost of  
47 regulating the industry in which the persons paying the fee operate.

48 (f) "Service fee" means a fee that a fee agency charges to cover the agency's cost of  
49 providing the goods or service for which the fee is charged.

50 (2) (a) A fee agency that charges or intends to charge a service fee or regulatory fee  
51 shall adopt a fee schedule.

52 (b) A service fee or regulatory fee that a fee agency charges shall:

53 (i) be reasonable and fair;

54 (ii) reflect and be based on the agency's cost for the fee; and

55 (iii) be established according to a cost formula determined by the executive director of  
56 the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and the director of the Division of Finance in  
57 conjunction with the fee agency seeking to establish the fee.

- 58 (3) Except as provided in Subsection (7), a fee agency may not:
- 59 (a) set fees by rule; or
- 60 (b) create, change, or collect any fee unless the fee has been established according to
- 61 the procedures and requirements of this section.
- 62 (4) Each fee agency that is proposing a new fee or proposing to change a fee shall:
- 63 (a) present each proposed fee at a public hearing, subject to the requirements of Title
- 64 52, Chapter 4, Open and Public Meetings Act;
- 65 (b) increase, decrease, or affirm each proposed fee based on the results of the public
- 66 hearing;
- 67 (c) except as provided in Subsection (8), submit the fee schedule to the Legislature as
- 68 part of the agency's annual appropriations request; and
- 69 (d) modify the fee schedule as necessary to implement the Legislature's actions.
- 70 (5) (a) No later than November 30, 2022, the Governor's Office of Planning and
- 71 Budget and the Division of Finance shall submit a report to the Infrastructure and General
- 72 Government Appropriations Subcommittee of the Legislature.
- 73 (b) A report under Subsection (5)(a) shall:
- 74 (i) provide a summary of:
- 75 (A) the types of service fees and regulatory fees included in the fee schedules of all fee
- 76 agencies;
- 77 (B) the methods used by fee agencies to determine the amount of fees;
- 78 (C) each estimated agency's cost related to each fee;
- 79 (D) whether a fee is intended to cover the agency's cost related to the fee;
- 80 (E) whether the fee agency intends to subsidize the fee to cover the agency's cost
- 81 related to the fee and, if so, the fee agency's justification for the subsidy; and
- 82 (F) whether the fee agency set the fee at an amount that exceeds the agency's cost
- 83 related to the fee and, if so, the fee agency's justification for the excess fee; and
- 84 (ii) include any recommendations for improving the process described in this section.
- 85 (6) (a) A fee agency shall submit the fee agency's fee schedule to the Legislature for the

86 Legislature's approval on an annual basis.

87 (b) The Legislature may approve, increase or decrease and approve, or reject any fee  
88 submitted to it by a fee agency.

89 (7) After conducting the public hearing required by this section, a fee agency may  
90 establish and assess fees without first obtaining legislative approval if:

91 (a) (i) the Legislature creates a new program that is to be funded by fees to be set by the  
92 Legislature;

93 (ii) the new program's effective date is before the Legislature's next annual general  
94 session; and

95 (iii) the fee agency submits the fee schedule for the new program to the Legislature for  
96 its approval at a special session, if allowed in the governor's call, or at the next annual general  
97 session of the Legislature, whichever is sooner; or

98 (b) (i) the fee agency proposes to increase or decrease an existing fee for the purpose of  
99 adding or removing a transactional fee that is charged or assessed by a non-governmental third  
100 party but is included as part of the fee charged by the fee agency;

101 (ii) the amount of the increase or decrease in the fee is equal to the amount of the  
102 transactional fee charged or assessed by the non-governmental third party; and

103 (iii) the increased or decreased fee is submitted to the Legislature for the Legislature's  
104 approval at a special session, if allowed in the governor's call, or at the next annual session of  
105 the Legislature, whichever is sooner.

106 (8) (a) A fee agency that intends to change any fee shall submit to the governor, as part  
107 of the agency's annual appropriation request a list that identifies:

108 (i) the title or purpose of the fee;

109 (ii) the present amount of the fee;

110 (iii) the proposed new amount of the fee;

111 (iv) the percent that the fee will have increased if the Legislature approves the higher  
112 fee;

113 (v) the estimated total annual revenue and total estimated annual revenue change that

114 will result from the changed fee;

115 (vi) the account or fund into which the fee will be deposited;

116 (vii) the reason for the change in the fee;

117 (viii) the estimated number of persons to be charged the fee;

118 (ix) the estimated agency's cost related to the fee;

119 (x) whether the fee is a service fee or a regulatory fee;

120 (xi) whether the fee is intended to cover the agency's cost related to the fee;

121 (xii) whether the fee agency intends to subsidize the fee to cover the agency's cost

122 related to the fee and, if so, the fee agency's justification for the subsidy; and

123 (xiii) whether the fee agency set the fee at an amount that exceeds the agency's cost

124 related to the fee and, if so, the fee agency's justification for the excess fee.

125 (b) (i) The governor may review and approve, modify and approve, or reject the fee

126 increases.

127 (ii) The governor shall transmit the list required by Subsection (8)(a), with any

128 modifications, to the legislative fiscal analyst with the governor's budget recommendations.

129 (c) Bills approving any fee change shall be filed before the beginning of the

130 Legislature's annual general session, if possible.

131 (9) (a) Except as provided in Subsection (9)(b), the School and Institutional Trust

132 Lands Administration, established in Section 53C-1-201, is exempt from the requirements of

133 this section.

134 (b) The following fees of the School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration are

135 subject to the requirements of this section: application, assignment, amendment, affidavit for

136 lost documents, name change, reinstatement, grazing nonuse, extension of time, partial

137 conveyance, patent reissue, collateral assignment, electronic payment, and processing.

138 Section 2. Section 78A-2-310 is enacted to read:

139 **78A-2-310. Report by Judicial Council on court fees.**

140 (1) As used in this section:

141 (a) "Cost" means the direct and indirect costs and expenses for providing the good or

142 service for which a fee is charged, including:

143 (i) salaries, benefits, contracted labor costs, travel expenses, training expenses,  
144 equipment and material costs, depreciation expenses, utility costs, and other overhead costs;

145 and

146 (ii) costs and expenses for administering the fee.

147 (b) (i) "Judiciary" means the Judicial Council, the Supreme Court, the Court of  
148 Appeals, a district court, or a juvenile court.

149 (ii) "Judiciary" includes any board, committee, or staff office of the Judicial Council,  
150 the Supreme Court, the Court of Appeals, a district court, or a juvenile court.

151 (2) Before November 30 of each year, the Judicial Council shall submit a report to the  
152 Infrastructure and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee of the Legislature that:

153 (a) includes details on:

154 (i) the types of fees charged and collected by the Judiciary;

155 (ii) the methods used to determine the amount of each fee charged and collected by the  
156 Judiciary;

157 (iii) the Judiciary's estimated cost related to each fee;

158 (iv) whether each fee is intended to cover the Judiciary's cost related to the fee; and

159 (v) the number of fee waivers granted by the Judiciary for each type of fee charged and  
160 collected by the Judiciary; and

161 (b) include any recommendations regarding fees charged and collected by the  
162 Judiciary.

163 (3) If the Judicial Council recommends that the Legislature create a fee or modify an  
164 existing fee under Subsection (2)(b), the Judicial Council shall include the following  
165 information with the recommendation:

166 (a) the title or purpose of the fee;

167 (b) the present amount of the fee;

168 (c) the proposed amount of the fee;

169 (d) the percent that the fee will have increased or decreased if the Legislature approves

170 the modification of the fee;  
171 (e) the estimated total annual revenue and total estimated annual revenue change that  
172 will result from the creation or modification of the fee;  
173 (f) the account or fund into which the fee will be deposited;  
174 (g) the reason for the creating or modifying the fee;  
175 (h) the estimated number of persons to be charged the fee;  
176 (i) the Judiciary's estimated cost related to the fee; and  
177 (j) whether the fee is intended to cover the Judiciary's cost related to the fee.