

Joseph Elison proposes the following substitute bill:

Concurrent Resolution Addressing the Great Salt Lake

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Joseph Elison

Senate Sponsor: Scott D. Sandall

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This resolution urges federal assistance in stabilizing and restoring the Great Salt Lake.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- discusses the importance of the Great Salt Lake to Utah's economy and residents and explains the lake's decline;
- addresses Utah's efforts in restoring the Great Salt Lake; and
- urges the federal government to provide assistance in stabilizing and restoring the Great Salt Lake.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:

WHEREAS, the Great Salt Lake is the largest lake in the Western United States, the largest saline lake in the Western Hemisphere, and one of America's most important natural resources;

WHEREAS, the Great Salt Lake is a vital source of critical minerals for U.S. industry, national security, and energy;

WHEREAS, fertilizer extracted from the Great Salt Lake supports farmers across the country;

WHEREAS, brine shrimp from the Great Salt Lake support the production of 10 million metric tons of seafood annually;

WHEREAS, the Great Salt Lake sustains more than 10 million migratory birds that make their way to every state in the nation and to every country in the Western Hemisphere;

WHEREAS, the federal and state government have invested billions of dollars in

infrastructure near the Great Salt Lake, including investments in the Hill Air Force Base, a federal prison, federal buildings home to the federal judiciary and federal agencies, federal interstates, highways, the international airport, and other critical infrastructure;

WHEREAS, the Great Salt Lake has lost more than half of its area and water volume, with years of drought, population growth, and other increasing demands on the lake's tributaries threatening to drive the Great Salt Lake to record lows;

WHEREAS, the Great Salt Lake's decline, if not reversed, threatens the homes and businesses of millions of citizens along with trillions of dollars invested in the region's infrastructure;

WHEREAS, the dust blown off the dried lakebed may contribute to melting mountain snow and may potentially expose Utahns and those in surrounding states to dangerous air pollutants;

WHEREAS, Utah will represent the nation when hosting the 2034 Olympic and Paralympic Games;

WHEREAS, Utah is determined to make the Great Salt Lake a restoration success story;

WHEREAS, due to its resolve, Utah has undertaken significant efforts to conserve water, modernize water policy, invest in restoration initiatives, and increase inflows to the Great Salt Lake;

WHEREAS, Utah's philanthropic and business leaders have pledged \$200 million of private investment in the Great Salt Lake's restoration;

WHEREAS, along with other water acquisitions, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is donating tens of thousands of acre-feet of water to the lake in perpetuity;

WHEREAS, restoring the Great Salt Lake may cost the state a significant investment of state and federal dollars;

WHEREAS, the rescue of the Great Salt Lake will stimulate American innovation in technology, agriculture, and water infrastructure, benefiting the nation;

WHEREAS, there is strong precedent for federal-state partnerships and investment in Western water projects, including Bureau of Reclamation projects and cost-sharing for major restoration projects across the country, that provide an established model for federal assistance in restoring the Great Salt Lake;

WHEREAS, on February 21, 2026, President Donald J. Trump publicly recognized the rescue of the Great Salt Lake as an urgent national priority and described the lake's decline as an environmental hazard that must be addressed immediately;

WHEREAS, President Trump expressed his willingness to support Utah in saving the lake and making the Great Salt Lake Great Again; and

64 WHEREAS, Utah praises the President's recognition and assistance and stands ready to
65 partner with the federal government and regional states to restore the Great Salt Lake:

66 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
67 Governor concurring therein, urges the President, Congress, and federal executive branch
68 agencies to provide substantial and timely assistance dedicated to stabilizing and restoring the
69 Great Salt Lake.

70 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature asks the federal government to work
71 with Utah to find a local solution that works for the people of Utah.

72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature requests the federal government to
73 negotiate with Utah a federal-state memorandum of understanding with cost-sharing
74 commitments and timelines, including a 2034 milestone, for the Great Salt Lake's recovery.

75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature emphasizes that federal assistance be
76 structured to supplement, rather than supplant, the state's initiatives, prioritize voluntary and
77 market-based solutions, respect state water law and local decision making, and focus on
78 protecting jobs, property values, national security interests, public health, integrity of our
79 wildlife, and critical federal investments in Utah.

80 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature affirms Utah's commitment to
81 partnership with President Trump and other federal leaders, along with leaders from Utah's
82 local governments and Utah's business, philanthropy, and religious communities, to restore the
83 Great Salt Lake ahead of the 2034 Olympics and to preserve the lake for future generations.

84 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature encourages Utah's congressional
85 delegation to pursue authorizing legislation and appropriations to implement the above,
86 including expedited emergency funding and the acceptance and allocation of funds necessary
87 to restore the Great Salt Lake.

88 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the
89 United States, the Majority and Minority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker and
90 Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, the members of Utah's
91 congressional delegation, and appropriate federal executive branch agencies.