

**JOINT RESOLUTION REGARDING ACTION  
ON GROUNDWATER IN SNAKE VALLEY**

2007 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

**Chief Sponsor: Richard W. Wheeler**

**Senate Sponsor: Dennis E. Stowell**

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30	Julie Fisher	Rosalind J. McGee	



**LONG TITLE**

**General Description:**

This joint resolution of the Legislature expresses to the Governor the will of the Legislature regarding the division of the aquifer shared with Nevada.

**Highlighted Provisions:**

37 This resolution:

38 ▶ urges the Governor to:

- 39 • consider the consequences of a potential groundwater development project;
- 40 • involve the citizens in developing the division agreement with Nevada; and
- 41 • refrain from entering into the division agreement with Nevada until scientific

42 studies have been completed and the agreement provides how to divide the

43 water; and

44 ▶ directs a copy of the resolution be sent to various parties.

45 **Special Clauses:**

46 None



48 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah:*

49 WHEREAS, there is an interstate aquifer underlying Snake Valley in western Utah and  
50 eastern Nevada;

51 WHEREAS, this aquifer is the source of the springs, seeps, and wells that support the  
52 citizens' livelihoods and fragile ecosystem in Snake Valley and other areas of western Utah;

53 WHEREAS, the Southern Nevada Water Authority has filed groundwater applications  
54 with the Nevada State Engineer to pump 50,680 acre-feet of water annually out of the aquifer  
55 as part of the Clark, Lincoln, and White Pine Counties Groundwater Development Project;

56 WHEREAS, the impacts this groundwater development project could have on the water  
57 resources, land, economy, wildlife, and overall quality of life in western Utah greatly concern  
58 the citizens of the state;

59 WHEREAS, Public Law 108-424, the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and  
60 Development Act of 2004, requires the United States Geological Survey, the Desert Research  
61 Institute, and a designee from the State of Utah to conduct a study known as the Basin and  
62 Range Carbonate Aquifer System Study;

63 WHEREAS, the steps of the study required by the Lincoln County Conservation,  
64 Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 are:

65 (1) investigate groundwater quantity, quality and flow characteristics in the deep  
66 carbonate and alluvial aquifers of White Pine County, Nevada;

67 (2) investigate groundwater quantity, quality, and flow characteristics in any  
68 groundwater basins that are located in White Pine County, Nevada, or Lincoln  
69 County, Nevada, and adjacent areas in Utah;

70 (3) include new data and review existing data;

71 (4) determine the approximate volume of water in the aquifers;

72 (5) determine the discharge and recharge characteristics of each aquifer system;

73 (6) determine the hydrogeologic and other controls that govern discharge and  
74 recharge of each aquifer system; and

75 (7) develop maps at a consistent scale depicting the aquifer systems and the  
76 recharge and discharge areas of such systems;

77 WHEREAS, the Bureau of Land Management's environmental impact study for the  
78 groundwater development project will analyze the environmental impacts associated with the  
79 anticipated groundwater withdrawal;

80 WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of  
81 2004 requires that, prior to any transbasin diversion from groundwater basins located both  
82 within the State of Nevada and the State of Utah, Utah and Nevada shall reach an agreement  
83 dividing the water resources of the interstate groundwater flow systems in which those  
84 interstate groundwater basins are located; and

85 WHEREAS, the Governor has assured the citizens of western Utah that he would not  
86 approve a project that would compromise peoples' lives and livelihoods, and there would be  
87 some continuity to their quality of life:

88 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature urges the Governor to  
89 carefully assess the groundwater development project's potential economic, social, and  
90 environmental consequences in Utah, including assessing impacts to indigenous flora and  
91 fauna and modeling groundwater behavior under any proposed pumping plan.

92 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature urges the Governor to allow public

93 participation in the development of the agreement with Nevada by inviting a citizen from  
94 Snake Valley to participate in the negotiations with Nevada and allowing public review and  
95 comment on a preliminary draft of the agreement.

96 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature urges the Governor to refrain from  
97 entering into an agreement with Nevada until:

98 (1) all steps of the scientific study required by the Lincoln County Conservation,  
99 Recreation, and Development Act of 2004 are complete to ensure that there is an adequate  
100 scientific basis on which to form an agreement; and

101 (2) the terms of the agreement itself provide for how to divide the water resources of  
102 the interstate groundwater flow systems in which the interstate groundwater basins are located,  
103 as required by the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of 2004.

104 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor of  
105 the state of Utah, the Governor of the state of Nevada, the Executive Director of the Utah  
106 Department of Natural Resources, the Director of the Nevada Department of Conservation and  
107 Natural Resources, the Utah State Engineer, the Nevada State Engineer, the General Manager  
108 of the Southern Nevada Water Authority, and a representative of the Snake Valley Citizen's  
109 Alliance.