

**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

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:

This resolution:

▶ urges the Governor to:

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

studies have been completed; and

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

Special Clauses:

None

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

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

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



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

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

34 WHEREAS, Public Law 108-424, the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and
35 Development Act of 2004, requires the United States Geological Survey to conduct a study,
36 known as the Basin and Range Carbonate Aquifer System Study, of the groundwater basins
37 adjacent to Utah;

38 WHEREAS, the study will determine the approximate volume of water in the aquifer,
39 the discharge and recharge characteristics of the aquifer, and the hydrogeologic and other
40 controls that govern the aquifer system;

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

44 WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of
45 2004 requires Utah and Nevada to reach an agreement dividing the water resources of the
46 interstate groundwater flow systems; and

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

50 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature urges the Governor to
51 carefully assess the groundwater development project's potential economic, social, and
52 environmental consequences in Utah.

53 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature urges the Governor to allow public
54 participation in the development of the agreement with Nevada by inviting a citizen from
55 Snake Valley to participate in the negotiations with Nevada and allowing public review and
56 comment on a preliminary draft of the agreement.

57 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature urges the Governor to refrain from
58 entering into an agreement with Nevada until scientific studies are complete to ensure that

59 there is an adequate scientific basis on which to form an agreement.

60 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Governor of
61 the state of Utah, the Governor of the state of Nevada, the Executive Director of the Utah
62 Department of Natural Resources, the Director of the Nevada Department of Conservation and
63 Natural Resources, the Utah State Engineer, the Nevada State Engineer, the General Manager
64 of the Southern Nevada Water Authority, and a representative of the Snake Valley Citizen's
65 Alliance.

Legislative Review Note
as of 11-15-06 4:58 PM

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel

Interim Committee Note
as of 12-12-06 11:27 AM

The Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee recommended this bill.

H.J.R. 1 - Joint Resolution Regarding Action on Groundwater in Snake Valley

Fiscal Note

2007 General Session

State of Utah

State Impact

Enactment of this bill will not require additional appropriations.

Individual, Business and/or Local Impact

Enactment of this bill likely will not result in direct, measurable costs and/or benefits for individuals, businesses, or local governments.

1/10/2007, 2:52:52 PM, Lead Analyst: Bleazard, M.

Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst