

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: Heidi Balderree

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 West, 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 American industry, national security, and energy;

WHEREAS, the Great Salt Lake supports more than 10 million migratory birds annually, as well as the production of 10 million metric tons of seafood;

WHEREAS, the federal government has 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, and the Salt Lake City International Airport;

WHEREAS, the Great Salt Lake has lost more than half of its area and water volume, with

30 years of drought, population growth, and other increasing demands on the lake's tributaries
31 threatening to drive the Great Salt Lake to a new record low this year or next;

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

35 WHEREAS, the dust blown off one thousand square miles of the Great Salt Lake's dried
36 lakebed melts mountain snow and exposes Utahns and those in surrounding states to
37 dangerous air pollutants;

38 WHEREAS, while no saline lake has been restored once it has begun to decline, Utah is
39 determined to make the Great Salt Lake the first such success story;

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

42 WHEREAS, Utah's philanthropy and business leaders have pledged \$200 million of private
43 investment in the Great Salt Lake's restoration, with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day
44 Saints donating tens of thousands of acre-feet of water to the lake in perpetuity;

45 WHEREAS, with Utah hosting the 2034 Winter Olympic Games, Utah's efforts in restoring
46 the Great Salt Lake will be seen by the world;

47 WHEREAS, despite Utah's efforts, experts estimate that saving the Great Salt Lake will
48 cost the state between \$2-\$10 billion;

49 WHEREAS, there is strong precedent for federal-state partnerships and investment in
50 Western water projects, including Bureau of Reclamation projects and cost-sharing for major
51 restoration projects in the Colorado River Basin, that provide an established model and
52 authority for federal assistance in restoring the Great Salt Lake;

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

56 WHEREAS, Utah welcomes the President's recognition and assistance and stands ready to
57 partner with the federal government and regional states to restore the Great Salt Lake; and

58 WHEREAS, the rescue of the lake will stimulate American innovation in technology,
59 agriculture, and water infrastructure, benefiting the country;

60 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
61 Governor concurring therein, urges the President, Congress, and federal agencies to provide
62 substantial and timely assistance dedicated to stabilizing and restoring the Great Salt Lake.

63 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature emphasizes that federal assistance be

64 structured to supplement, rather than supplant, the state's initiatives, prioritize voluntary and
65 market-based solutions, respect state water law and local decision making, and focus on
66 protecting jobs, property values, national security interests, public health, integrity of our
67 wildlife, and critical federal investments in Utah.

68 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature affirms Utah's commitment to
69 partnership with President Trump and other federal leaders, along with leaders from Utah's
70 local governments and Utah's business, philanthropy, and religious communities, to restore the
71 Great Salt Lake ahead of the 2034 Winter Olympics and to preserve it for future generations.

72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the
73 United States, the Majority and Minority Leader of the United States Senate, the Speaker and
74 Minority Leader of the United States House of Representatives, and the members of Utah's
75 congressional delegation.