

1                   **CONCURRENT RESOLUTION CONCERNING BEAR LAKE**

2                                   2019 GENERAL SESSION

3                                   STATE OF UTAH

4                                   **Chief Sponsor: Logan Wilde**

5                                   Senate Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_

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7   **LONG TITLE**

8   **General Description:**

9           This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and Governor encourages action regarding  
10 Bear Lake.

11 **Highlighted Provisions:**

12           This resolution:

- 13           ▶ recognizes the characteristics, benefits, and challenges of Bear Lake;
- 14           ▶ urges solutions to address challenges to Bear Lake;
- 15           ▶ urges continued cooperation with the state of Idaho to develop joint expectations for
- 16 the continued health, beauty, and enjoyment of Bear Lake; and
- 17           ▶ encourages the development of opportunities for participation of a wide-range of
- 18 stakeholders to develop recommendations.

19 **Special Clauses:**

20           None

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

23           WHEREAS, the state of Utah is committed to protecting and enhancing Bear Lake  
24 storage water supplies, maintaining its pristine water quality, and enhancing recreational and  
25 economic opportunities for Utah's citizens and tourists who add to our economy;

26           WHEREAS, Bear Lake is a large freshwater lake straddling the border of Utah and  
27 Idaho with approximately half of the lake in each state, and it is the second largest natural



28 freshwater lake by area in the state of Utah;

29 WHEREAS, Bear Lake has a surface area of approximately 110 square miles;

30 WHEREAS, Bear Lake is the oldest known continually "wet" lake in North America,  
31 and one of the five oldest lakes in the world, being at least 250,000 years old;

32 WHEREAS, international scientists study Bear Lake for clues to the climate and  
33 ecology of the region;

34 WHEREAS, Bear Lake has unique water chemistry giving it the intense turquoise blue  
35 color for which it is known all over the world;

36 WHEREAS, Bear Lake has an extensive shoreline with areas of cobbled and sandy  
37 beaches that offer prime recreational opportunities;

38 WHEREAS, in addition to having more endemic fish species (four found only in Bear  
39 Lake) than any other lake in the United States, Bear Lake is home to the largest and most  
40 genetically pure population of Bonneville cutthroat trout in existence, and the Bonneville  
41 cutthroat trout is Utah's state fish;

42 WHEREAS, since about 1912, the upper 21.65 feet of Bear Lake (approximately  
43 1,400,000 acre feet of water) has been used as a storage reservoir replenished from natural  
44 inflow sources and from diversions from the Bear River in Idaho made by PacifiCorp;

45 WHEREAS, the storage reservoir in Bear Lake has been operated by PacifiCorp to  
46 supply supplemental irrigation water to approximately 150,000 acres of prime irrigated  
47 agriculture on family farms and ranches downstream in Utah and Idaho for over 100 years and  
48 will remain an essential supplemental irrigation water supply into the future;

49 WHEREAS, the historic Bear Lake supplemental irrigation water supply is protected by  
50 many agreements among PacifiCorp, the states of Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming, the Bear River  
51 Water Users Association and its members, and Bear Lake Watch, each with individual and  
52 unique interests in Bear Lake;

53 WHEREAS, in addition to the irrigation water supply, esthetic and recreation uses,  
54 PacifiCorp also operates Bear Lake for flood control, and water released and pumped from  
55 Bear Lake is used to generate 107 megawatts of electricity downstream on the Bear River;

56 WHEREAS, at times when water is low or is released or pumped from Bear Lake, the  
57 exposed lakebed is vulnerable to nonnative vegetation invasion and degradation which create  
58 hazards to navigation and impair recreational use for tens of thousands of visitors and

59 thousands of homeowners;

60 WHEREAS, Bear Lake is a major recreation destination, with five Utah State Park  
61 recreation areas and two Idaho State Park recreation areas, the Bear Lake National Wildlife  
62 Refuge, private marinas, and Boy Scout camps;

63 WHEREAS, Bear Lake is vital to local and regional economies in Utah and Idaho; and

64 WHEREAS, the state of Utah is committed to work in collaboration with the state of  
65 Idaho, PacifiCorp, irrigators, and local stakeholders to protect existing uses and plan for the  
66 future uses and enjoyment of Bear Lake:

67 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the  
68 Governor concurring therein, urges solutions to address challenges to Bear Lake, including  
69 recreation and economic development interests, water quality, invasive species, lakebed  
70 management and preservation, and enhancement of irrigation water storage and water supply  
71 functions.

72 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor urge continued  
73 cooperation with the state of Idaho to develop joint expectations for the continued health,  
74 beauty, and enjoyment of Bear Lake.

75 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor encourage the  
76 development of opportunities for participation with stakeholders to develop recommendations  
77 to protect and enhance existing beneficial uses, maintain a healthy and sustainable lake,  
78 encourage economic development, protect irrigation water storage, enhance recreation, and  
79 preserve and protect Bear Lake for future generations.