



FRIENDS of GREAT SALT LAKE

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July 17, 2023

The Honorable Mike Lee
U.S. Senate
363 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Curtis
U.S. House of Representatives
2323 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitt Romney
U.S. Senate
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Stewart
U.S. House of Representatives
166 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Burgess Owens
U.S. House of Representatives
309 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Blake Moore
U.S. House of Representatives
1131 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Support for the Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act (H.R. 4094/S. 1955)

Dear Utah Congressional Delegation,

I'm writing on behalf of FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake to express our full support for the *Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act*. FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake is a 501c3 membership organization founded in 1994. Our mission is to preserve and protect the Great Salt Lake ecosystem and to increase public awareness and appreciation through education, research, advocacy, and the arts. Although we work on a daily basis with GSL stakeholders, policy makers and the community at large, the scope of our work goes beyond the Lake's watershed so we can learn more about the science, management challenges, and policies from regional, hemispheric, and global partners working on these unique and extremely complex saline ecosystems. FRIENDS supports this bill because the work that is required to preserve and protect what is not only a hemispherically critical ecosystem for millions of migratory birds that rely on it, but also a Public Trust resource to be managed in perpetuity for the people of Utah requires an "all hands on deck" approach. Your initiative with the introduction of the *Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act* endorses that responsibility and approach. Thank you.

Since 2017, FRIENDS has worked closely with the Utah Legislature in support of its work to generate important water legislation addressing the sustainable management of Utah's water supply while our population continues to grow and Great Salt Lake continues to decline. FRIENDS has been working with an array of GSL stakeholders including state, local, and federal government agencies, academia, industry and scientists. Doing this work, FRIENDS has had the particular honor and pleasure of working closely with Speaker Brad Wilson, Utah House of Representatives on timely legislation and public education to address the future of Great Salt Lake.

The *Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act* provides access to additional funding resources needed to increase water conservation efforts and augment water flows into the Great Salt Lake basin. Sustained drought has caused the lake levels to decline to a concerning degree. Water conservation is a top priority, and this bill recognizes the importance of advancing projects that will help to replenish the Great Salt Lake.

The *Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act* will enhance access to federal funding for water conservation projects by adding a new provision to the Central Utah Project Completion Act (CUPCA - Public Law 102-575). This change gives the Secretary of Interior the flexibility to reallocate unspent budget authorities within Title II of CUPCA and to put funds towards water conservation activities. Also, the bill expands the scope of the CUPCA water conservation program to now include the Great Salt Lake basin, which will greatly benefit the lake. Finally, the CUPCA program enjoys annual funding support from Congress providing a stable source of future funding for water conservation initiatives.

We live along the shores of something GREAT- Great Salt Lake. A lake that defines our history, our culture and our sense of place.

Thank you for introducing the *Great Salt Lake Stewardship Act* and for your work in advancing it through the legislative process.

In saline and solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lynn E. de Freitas". The signature is written in a cursive style with a blue background behind it.

Lynn E. de Freitas, Executive Director
FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake