



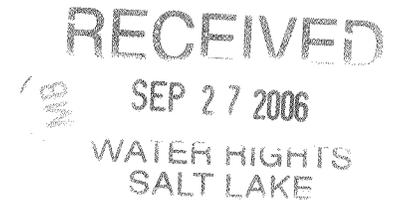
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# Utah State Legislature

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September 25, 2006



Mr. Jerry Olds  
State Engineer  
PO Box 146300  
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-6300

**Subject:** Proposed Resolution Regarding Snake Valley Groundwater

Dear Mr. Olds:

At its September 20, 2006 meeting, the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee of the Utah Legislature unanimously voted to endorse the 2007 General Session draft legislation, "Joint Resolution Regarding Action on Groundwater in Snake Valley." The resolution urges the governor of Utah to consider the consequences of a potential groundwater development project and to involve the citizens in developing the division agreement with Nevada. The resolution also urges the governor to refrain from entering into the agreement with Nevada until scientific studies have been completed.

The Committee asked that a copy of the resolution be sent to you for your information.

Sincerely,

*Thomas V. Hatch*  
Thomas V. Hatch, Senate Chair *flm*  
Natural Resources, Agriculture, and  
Environment Interim Committee

*Roger E. Barrus*  
Roger E. Barrus, House Chair *flm*  
Natural Resources, Agriculture, and  
Environment Interim Committee

Enclosure

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

2007 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

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**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

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*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;

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

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

WHEREAS, Public Law 108-424, the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and

33 Development Act of 2004, requires the United States Geological Survey to conduct a study,  
34 known as the Basin and Range Carbonate Aquifer System Study, of the groundwater basins  
35 adjacent to Utah;

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

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

42 WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Conservation, Recreation, and Development Act of  
43 2004 requires Utah and Nevada to reach an agreement dividing the water resources of the  
44 interstate groundwater flow systems; and

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

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

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

55 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature urges the Governor to refrain from  
56 entering into an agreement with Nevada until scientific studies are complete to ensure that  
57 there is an adequate scientific basis on which to form an agreement.

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