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Diesel Spill Won't Impact Fishing This Holiday Weekend

Sampling Shows Willard Bay Fish Safe to Eat

Salt Lake City, Utah – While there's no guarantee you will land "the big one" in Willard Bay this Memorial Day weekend, you can at least enjoy frying up your catch.

Analytical results from fish samples taken in Willard Bay show no diesel contamination to fish from the March 19th pipeline spill.

Since Willard Bay is a popular destination for sport fishing, there were concerns about possible impacts to fish and health risks to people consuming fish from the Bay. The Division of Water Quality (DWQ) and Utah Department of Health did a preliminary evaluation soon after the spill and found no identifiable health risks, since diesel-related contaminants were measured in only trace concentrations in Willard Bay and those trace amounts were expected to break down quickly in the water following the spill.

To confirm this, scientists from the Division of Wildlife Resources and DWQ netted wipers, catfish, and gizzard shad from the reservoir on May 9. Scientists took tissue samples from 15 fish, with five samples from three species. DWQ sent seventeen samples, including two quality control samples, to a laboratory for analysis for diesel-related contaminants.

"The lab analysis detected no diesel contamination in the fish sampled", explained Walt Baker, director of the Division of Water Quality. "This indicates that fish from the reservoir are safe to eat. We hope this information helps people go out and enjoy their favorite activities this holiday weekend."

The North Marina at Willard Bay State Park remains closed, with buoys prohibiting access to the contaminated beach area. The South Marina, including launch ramps, camping, and day use areas, is open.

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