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New Study Examines Impacts of Water Conservation on Large Utah Water Development Projects *Study finds changes to Utah's water use habits required to postpone Bear River-like projects*

SALT LAKE CITY — Great Salt Lake Advisory Council released a new study, [Conservation Impacts Study](#), today which examines the impacts of conservation on Utah water resource planning and large water development projects, which could affect water reaching the already-drying Great Salt Lake. The study concluded significant, yet achievable, conservation could postpone the need for water development projects, particularly those planned in the Bear River area, for another 40 years.

The conservation study, which evaluated four primary water providers in Northern Utah, established the daily average per person water consumption in 2015 was 232 gallons per day in these large water districts. With these current water use habits, [prior studies](#) have found Great Salt Lake levels could drop up to another 11 feet in the near future. By reducing the per person water consumption by about 50 gallons a day — a total of 173 gallons per day per person — the study concluded this level of conservation would postpone the need for large water developments such as the Bear River Development Project beyond 2065.

“Upstream water use has a significant impact on the quantity of water reaching Great Salt Lake,” said Don Leonard, Chair of Great Salt Lake Advisory Council. “This is something we should all be concerned about since a dry lake could severely harm human health, our environment and Utah’s economy.”

[Previous studies](#) by The Council showed further declines of the lake could cost billions of dollars in economic losses and mitigation efforts and cause severe harm to human health, worsen air quality and the environment. Economic losses could total \$1.69 billion to \$2.17 billion per year or \$25.4 to \$32.6 billion over twenty years, and trigger job losses of over 6,500 positions in the mineral, brine shrimp, and tourism industries.

“Utahns need to adapt new water use habits in order for us to save the valuable resource that is Great Salt Lake,” according to Leland Myers, former Chair of Great Salt Lake Advisory Council.

The new conservation study calls for active participation and acceptance from homeowners, businesses, municipalities and legislators to make changes to current water use habits and land development. A few actions required to achieve this level of conservation mentioned by the study include:

- Replacing old toilets with high-efficiency toilets
- Buying a high-efficiency washing machine

- Watering lawns one to two days less a week; and
- Replacing grassy park strips with water-conserving landscape

The full Conservation Impacts Study can be found on the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council's [website](#).

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About Great Salt Lake Advisory Council

Through adoption of House Bill 343 during the 2010 general session of the Utah Legislature, the Great Salt Lake Advisory Council was created to advise on the sustainable use, protection and development of the Great Salt Lake. Great Salt Lake is of hemispheric importance as both a refueling stop for millions of migratory birds and a nesting area for others. Eighty percent of Utah's wetlands surround the lake. The mineral extraction industry, duck hunting clubs, and the brine shrimp industry are dependent upon the vitality of the lake. Nature enthusiasts flock to the lake because of its ecological importance. Utahns draw a significant amount of their heritage and identity from the lake. Water levels at Great Salt Lake have been on a sustained downward trend for over a decade – since at least 1998 – and recent analyses indicate a general decline in its water levels of 11 feet due to our use of water. Further declines to the lake, particularly those over a long period, could cost billions of dollars in economic losses and mitigation efforts and cause severe harm to human health and the environment. Economic losses could total \$1.69 billion to \$2.17 billion per year, or \$25.4 billion to \$32.6 billion over 20 years, and trigger job losses of over 6,500 positions in the mineral, brine shrimp and tourism industries.

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