

# News Release

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## **COALITION SAYS NO CLEAR NEED HAS BEEN SHOWN FOR THE PROPOSED EXPANSION**

*Responding to Great Salt Lake Minerals announcement of a modified expansion plan, Coalition urges company to withdraw its proposal and wait until we know enough to make sound decisions about the lake.*

Salt Lake City, UT – The Coalition to Keep the Lake Great, a group representing thirteen conservation and citizens groups, responded Thursday to an announcement from the Great Salt Lake Minerals Corporation (GSLM). The mining company, a subsidiary of Kansas-based Compass Minerals, outlined modifications to its massive request to use more than 91,000 acres of the Lake to extract sulfate of potash for making fertilizer.

“We have raised numerous concerns over the past year about this expansion,” said Lynn de Freitas, Coalition spokesperson and Executive Director of FRIENDS of Great Salt Lake. “The Company is still requesting the use of more than 142 square miles of the lake to create evaporation ponds. That is more than the landmass of Salt Lake City, Ogden, and Provo combined. However, the modified request outlines a phased plan instead of giving the company all of the land in one fell swoop.

“The company already has been given large portions of this public trust resource to operate. They say they simply want to keep up with market demand, but just recently they announced efficiency measures to reduce existing water use and increase production enough to meet that demand for more than a decade without further expansion. At the same time, their figures show almost flat demand at that point, said de Freitas. “ So why give away more of the public’s resources unnecessarily?”

“They say this approach will allow for impacts on the lake to be monitored before the next phase commences,” continued de Freitas. “Rather than making sure we understand those impacts properly in advance, as the law requires, they now propose to develop first and study the effects later. By then it may be too late to protect the Lake.”

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The mining company's revised application will also ask for less water over the life of the expansion. However the State Engineer has indicated that Great Salt Lake water is already over appropriated so where would the water come from?

"GSLM is positioning their decreased water request as a way to do its part in conservation," said de Freitas. "However preliminary reports from scientists suggest that further expansion of the operation could jeopardize water levels in the lake, threaten public health from air pollution from new expanses of dry lake bed, and threaten nesting colonies for Pelicans and other important species. In our view, Great Salt Lake is critically valuable to the state and the public for health, recreation, ecological and other reasons. It should not be given away for purely private development in ways that impair those resources, or without compelling reasons to do so.

Although an official Draft Environmental Impact Statement for GSLM's proposed expansion has not yet been released for public comment, the Coalition has raised numerous concerns about the expansion to decision makers in the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands, the US Army Corps of Engineers, and the US Environmental Protection Agency. These impacts include:

- Increased air pollution from new expanses of dry lake bed
- Potentially more harmful methyl mercury, which is toxic to humans and wildlife, near the Wasatch Front
- Destruction of critical wildlife habitat, especially in the Bear River Bay, an internationally important stopping ground for many species of birds
- The loss of recreation access for hunters, birdwatchers, and boaters

To learn more about the impacts from the GSLM proposal and the Coalition to Keep the Lake Great, please visit [www.keepthelakegreat.com](http://www.keepthelakegreat.com).

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