

November 6, 2023

# Great Salt Lake Wetlands

## Harms from Utah Inland Port Development

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### Summary

**The Utah Inland Port Authority has become the single greatest threat to the wetlands of the Great Salt Lake**

The looming ecological collapse of the Great Salt Lake (GSL) has received widespread national and international attention. Pressure is building for the state to take serious action to restore more water to the lake to preserve its viability. Much less attention however is paid to the state recently setting in motion public policy that is imperiling the wetlands that surround the lake. We cannot save the

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lake if we sacrifice its wetlands. In total disregard for this reality, a state created agency, the Utah Inland Port Authority (UIPA) has become a mortal threat to tens of thousands of acres of Great Salt Lake (GSL) wetlands. UIPA is using public money to help private developers create massive public harm.

By scattering publicly subsidized “project areas” throughout the Wasatch Front, most of them in GSL wetlands, UIPA sponsored industrial development will have a substantial negative impact on public health, the environment, and quality of life for much of Utah’s population. A conservative estimate is that approximately 52,729 acres of wetlands will be lost through UIPA’s actions in the Great Salt Lake Basin. Specifically, on the shores of Great Salt Lake, 49,231 acres are in harm’s way from UIPA’s strategy.

Wetlands provide irreplaceable services for the environment, including water filtration and flood water management, air pollution mitigation, carbon sequestration, as well as providing critical wildlife habitat.

Replacing wetlands with broad expanses of roads, parking lots, concentrated vehicle traffic, and massive warehouses, add to the damage in multiple ways. The new impermeable surfaces introduced through UIPA’s planned development narrow the floodplain of wetlands, diminishing their ability to control extremes in precipitation, and impair water quality. The cars, trucks, airplanes, and locomotives servicing this development will all generate more air pollution. New industrial development depletes water resources, accelerates population growth, and creates new sources of noise and light pollution. All of this combines to make the directly impacted communities, as well as surrounding land, inhospitable to a healthy life for humans, and often impossible for the survival of wildlife.

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UIPA makes several specious claims about their project areas that our report refutes. UIPA claims they will, (1) not destroy wetlands, (2) improve air quality, and (3) provide “smart growth” that will reduce the consequences of otherwise inevitable, massive, unbridled expansion of Utah’s population and employment base. These claims are based on either pure speculation, not supported by the evidence, or contradict the evidence, common sense, and their own statements.