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Great Salt Lake Audubon Position Regarding the Proposed Inland Port

Great Salt Lake Audubon (GSLA) does not support SB 234 in its original form nor the substitute bill as they have appeared far too late in the session for legitimate discussion. Additionally, neither bill protects or provides a voice to the communities or the environmentally sensitive areas that adjoin the Northwest Quadrant (NWQ). These bills portend a future of irretrievable, irreversible impacts that will create an environmental sacrifice zone on the shores of the Great Salt Lake (GSL) and the gateway to our city. Plans for an inland port that include gas pipeline, oil tank farm and a coal export operation on our doorstep will worsen air quality and subject westside residents to continued and additional environmental and economic injustice.

GSLA strongly supports that re-evaluation of the bills occur and that the provisions outlined in the NWQ Master Plan and subsequent rezoning be adhered to throughout the process and be included in any NWQ inland port development bill. The Master Plan provides appropriate guidance for smart, sustainable light industrial development while protecting the GSL and its associated habitat and the communities that adjoin this area.

The Master Plan and associated zoning were developed over the course of several years through an open, transparent, thoughtful process that included private landowner, community, conservation, business, and government stakeholders. We believe that while providing development opportunities, the Master Plan protects our westside communities, the GSL natural areas habitat, and the millions of birds that so depend on it. The GSL and its associated habitat provides one of the largest remaining environments for migrating and nesting birds and is considered a Globally Important Bird Area. Any development in the Northwest Quadrant must insure that natural open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas along the south shore of the Lake be preserved and protected.

To protect and enhance habitat for wild birds, animals and plants, and to maintain healthy and diverse environments for wildlife and people throughout the State