

**A great day for Idaho and for Bear Lake**

**and all the people who cherish it as well as those who depend on it.**



**Wednesday March 29**

**Idaho bill for Bear Lake Preservation**

**Signed by Governor Brad Little at a ceremony**

**S1112 passed unanimously through both the House and Senate**

**(see the bill)**

This signing sets into the law of Idaho a clear statement that Bear Lake should be preserved for all generations to enjoy with all its beautiful and valuable qualities.



This seemingly small but hugely important addition to Chapter 43, Title 67 of the Idaho Code brings Bear Lake into the *fold* with the other prized and protected lakes of Idaho.

This section will stand as a guidepost for future legislatures and administrations of Idaho, to help them see that they stay the course leading to the preservation of the natural character of the lake even while we use it to aid irrigation production and power generation.

It also indicates there is a part for you to play in achieving the goals by calling out the need for collaboration among agencies and stakeholders.

*This has been years in the making; setting the stage, helping people see the need, developing trust and partnerships, finding the right words to put on paper and finally guiding it through the legislative process.*

We send a heartfelt thanks to Senator Mark Harris, Representatives Josh Wheeler and Kevin Andrus and all who assisted us along the way and through all the years.

Claudia & David

[\(Read the bill - don't worry, it's short\)](#)

**We are not done yet!**

**Remember that our goal is**

**"2 States – One Goal"**

Senator Chris Wilson's success in Utah took a slightly different path. More on that later..

but we will be bringing similar bill to Utah next year.



Claudia Cottle

David Cottle

Bear Lake Watch

Government & External Affairs Team

[blue@bearlakewatch.com](mailto:blue@bearlakewatch.com)

REVISED

**STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

**RS30399 / S1112**

This legislation will add Bear Lake to existing Idaho Code that preserves the lakes and water of Idaho. It recognizes Bear Lake's unique qualities to the people of the State while acknowledging its current uses for irrigation storage, power generation, flood control, and recreation.

**FISCAL NOTE**

This legislation has no impact to the State's General Fund or to dedicated funds as it only acknowledges in Idaho code the positive qualities of Bear Lake to the citizens of Idaho.

**Contact:**

Senator Mark Harris  
(208) 332-1341  
Representative Kevin Andrus  
(208) 332-1000  
Representative Josh Wheeler  
(208) 332-1000

**DISCLAIMER:** This statement of purpose and fiscal note are a mere attachment to this bill and prepared by a proponent of the bill. It is neither intended as an expression of legislative intent nor intended for any use outside of the legislative process, including judicial review (Joint Rule 18).



IN THE SENATE

SENATE BILL NO. 1112

BY STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

AN ACT

1 RELATING TO BEAR LAKE; AMENDING CHAPTER 43, TITLE 67, IDAHO CODE, BY THE AD-  
2 DITION OF A NEW SECTION 67-4313, IDAHO CODE, TO RECOGNIZE BEAR LAKE AS  
3 A HIGHLY VALUED RESOURCE AND TO RECOGNIZE ITS UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS,  
4 TO PROVIDE FOR BEAR LAKE'S PRESERVATION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS, TO PRO-  
5 VIDE THAT THE STATE DESIRES TO PREVENT DEGRADATION OF BEAR LAKE, TO PRO-  
6 VIDE THAT THE STATE SUPPORTS ENHANCEMENT OF THE OPERATIONAL UTILITY OF  
7 BEAR LAKE FOR IRRIGATION STORAGE PURPOSES, TO ENCOURAGE COLLABORATION  
8 AMONG AGENCIES AND STAKEHOLDERS, AND TO PROVIDE THAT PROVISIONS SHALL  
9 NOT CHANGE ANY WATER RIGHTS OR APPROPRIATE ANY WATER; AND DECLARING AN  
10 EMERGENCY AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.  
11

12 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Idaho:

13 SECTION 1. That Chapter 43, Title 67, Idaho Code, be, and the same is  
14 hereby amended by the addition thereto of a NEW SECTION, to be known and des-  
15 ignated as Section 67-4313, Idaho Code, and to read as follows:

16 67-4313. BEAR LAKE. The legislative intent of this section is to rec-  
17 ognize the following:

18 (1) Bear Lake was a natural lake at the time Idaho gained its statehood  
19 and remains a highly valued resource for its native fisheries, recreation,  
20 and distinctive characteristics, including its water clarity and mineral  
21 and chemical uniqueness, giving it the intense turquoise blue color for  
22 which it is known all over the world.

23 (2) While serving as a reservoir, Bear Lake retains its basic native  
24 form and character, preserving much of its valued scenic beauty, navigabil-  
25 ity, and lake-related recreation opportunities. It is the desire and expect-  
26 ation of the state of Idaho that Bear Lake and its inherent qualities and  
27 characteristics be preserved for future generations.

28 (3) The state of Idaho desires to prevent the lake's degradation in  
29 quality and functions and to preserve and enhance the lake's unique char-  
30 acteristics, including but not limited to native fish and wildlife, unique  
31 water quality, native lake bed, navigation, littoral rights, lake-related  
32 recreation, and irrigation storage.

33 (4) Bear Lake has been operated as a reservoir since the early 1900s  
34 to store water for irrigation, flood control, and incidental power gener-  
35 ation, which has enhanced agricultural productivity and prosperity in the  
36 Bear River basin and will remain an essential irrigation water supply into  
37 the future. The state of Idaho supports enhancement of the operational util-  
38 ity of Bear Lake for irrigation storage purposes.

39 (5) To achieve the goals of this section, the state of Idaho encourages  
40 collaboration among agencies and stakeholders to help preserve and enhance  
41 such interests.

1           (6) Nothing in this section is intended to impair or constrain the oper-  
2     ation of Bear Lake, to interfere with or change any water rights, or to appro-  
3     priumate any water.

4           SECTION 2. An emergency existing therefor, which emergency is hereby  
5     declared to exist, this act shall be in full force and effect on and after  
6     July 1, 2023.