



## Statement on S.B. 234 Utah Inland Port Authority – March 5, 2018

National Audubon Society's Gillmor Sanctuary sits along the southern shore of Great Salt Lake, which is recognized as a globally important resource for migratory birds. As a neighboring landowner to Salt Lake City's Northwest Quadrant (NWQ), with a mission to protect birds, land, and water of Great Salt Lake and its shoreline, National Audubon Society has a strong interest in how the NWQ is developed, managed, and governed.

Audubon staff worked for years with both the City and landowners in the NWQ to scientifically identify sensitive habitat and reach agreement on the designation of a "Natural Zone" for the benefit of birds, wildlife and people. The Natural Zone serves as an important buffer between development and the many acres of public and private lands along Great Salt Lake north and west of the NWQ that are largely managed for wildlife.

The Natural Zone was incorporated into the City's NWQ Master Plan. Additionally, the plan includes parameters to guide potential development intended to support quality jobs with clean, sustainable light industry with the aim of also protecting the environment and quality of life.

The draft Utah Inland Port Authority bill that surfaced late in the 2018 legislative session has not had adequate public discussion. Ideally, Utah leaders will pause and provide an opportunity for residents, neighbors, landowners and other key stakeholders to voice their ideas on legislation that will have far-reaching implications.

If any port legislation moves forward, it needs to ensure that the goals and protections of the NWQ Master Plan are met. This includes protections for the Natural Zone, human health, air quality, and land and water resources. Additionally, the governance and procedural protections of land-use planning decisions should be retained at the local level. There also needs to be public accountability for any board that would oversee a port authority. Moreover, any decision-making processes concerning development should include meaningful public processes.

*In summary: "National Audubon Society believes any inland port legislation should retain the local authorities of Salt Lake City and the Northwest Quadrant Master Plan. As a neighboring landowner to the Northwest Quadrant, it is critical that protections remain in place for the sensitive natural ecosystem near Great Salt Lake. Any development in the Northwest Quadrant should not only produce good jobs and economic benefits, but also protect the health and air quality of surrounding communities and Great Salt Lake."*

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