

# Three Questions

## Hook Canyon Project- Bear Lake

15 April 2008

Utah Governor: Jon Huntsman Jr.,

Thank you for reading and considering these comments regarding the proposed Hook Canyon Reservoir Project at Bear Lake in northern Utah—an issue where a **political action from your office could potentially provide results of great value to the vast majority of Utah and Idaho citizens associated with or who otherwise enjoy the natural resource of Bear Lake** as well as numerous domestic and international visitors.

**In evaluating the proposed Hook Canyon Reservoir Project**, I submit someone like you, having the ability to prevent this project from advancing and becoming a reality, should minimally **consider the following three questions:**

- 1. Is this the right technology at the right time?**
- 2. Is Symbiotics the right group?**
- 3. Is Bear Lake the right location?**

### **1. Right Technology, Right Time?**

I do not profess to be sufficiently knowledgeable in matters of energy generation, transfer, or storage. It has been suggested the **cost differential between nighttime and daytime power will decrease over time such that, in seven to 10 years when this project would potentially be approved and constructed, the underlying advantage would render this system (with an inherent 25% energy loss) no longer economically viable.** There is a real chance the local residents would be left with a partially complete, or finished, stillborn dinosaur.

**This power storage system is a net contributor to greenhouse gases and does not favorably impact the larger issue of global warming.** Perhaps this technology made more sense 50 years ago. It does not seem to be a forward-looking project based on innovative practices and technology for new clean renewable energy (as recommended by BRAC). Apparently there are no other applicants for this type of energy storage mechanism now seeking approval with FERC. It seems Symbiotics are backward rather than forward-looking.

Although you and your staff are more qualified to answer this question than I, the energy loss and future economic viability fundamentals of this system require focused scrutiny.

## **2. Symbiotics Right Group?**

I attended the first evening meeting conducted by FERC in Montpelier Idaho on April 9, 2008 wherein Symbiotics LLC presented their case followed by public comment. The auditorium was full on a night when two other well attended public meetings were held in the Bear Lake Valley. Regardless of the clear majority in opposition to this proposed project, the significant prevailing impression was Symbiotic lacked experience and competence. Given the quality of their PAD (Pre-Application Document) report, the content of their PowerPoint Presentation, the absence of Dr. Vince Lamarra (whose firm, Ecosystems Research Institute, wrote the PAD), as well as their general PR approach it seems clear Symbiotics lack experience in administrating a project of this magnitude. **It appears they are undertaking a huge construction and power project with potentially grave ecological impact to one of Utah's prime natural resources and doing this for the first time – learning and discovering as they go, at the potential expense of others (the public) and detriment to public lands and lake water resources.**

The CEO of Symbiotics lacked integrity and credibility. When asked direct questions about their profit projections he initially attempted to suggest he did not know, then provided indirect non-answers and never properly responded to basic questions any investor would need to know, i.e., knowledge he must have. It seems he and the rest of this amateur **Symbiotics group see promise for significant private re-numeration for their efforts and are compromising their values, or are generally out-of-tune with the environment and potential negative ecological impact on public resources. If Bear Lake's water quality or local economy is tarnished, it does not negatively impact their power storage money making mechanism.** This is a recipe for real economic and ecological disaster -- a black eye on a generally well-run state with for the most part, balanced and intelligent natural resource management.

Symbiotics is not the right group given their evident lack of experience, integrity and competence.

## **3. Bear Lake the right place?**

**If your answer to either of the prior two questions is affirmative, this third question clearly must be answered in the negative and trump the prior two. Bear Lake is not the right place.** In the Western United States, Bear Lake is one of a very few naturally occurring lakes with luminous water that is a very real public asset. It is often compared to Lake Tahoe and the Caribbean. Risking this asset is beyond comprehension for those of us with history in and appreciation for this area. It seems Symbiotics has selected this location because of the adjacent Utah State (SITLA) property and the requisite elevation drop with few private landowners to deal with. **Symbiotics state they will work to minimize the impact to the water quality of the Lake, aquatic life, and other aspects of the environment -- but they also recognize they do not really know what the impact will be.** *(Note: the 2 to 3 inches of daily fluctuation suggested by Symbiotics results in hundreds of feet of lateral movement of the lake shore over a*

*majority of the Lake, a man-induced change with unknown ecological impact. Symbiotics also suggests the lake would not freeze over in the winter, another ecological impact lowering average winter temperatures in the Bear Lake Valley. Increasing the effective surface area of Bear Lake would increase evaporation loss in an already dry region, and likely increase average Lake water temperature.)*

**The magnitude of the proposed human impact (drilling, excavating, then pumping 5,000,000,000 gallons in and out of the Lake daily) on a pristine and unique natural lake is an affront to the sensibility to anyone with even a fundamental understanding of the quality of this jewel, Bear Lake.**

Bear Lake is not the right place.

**Suggestion to You and Your Staff:**

This is an ill-fated project, conceived by amateurs with disregard for the impact to tens of thousands of Bear Lake landowners and recreationalist. Their undisclosed perceived personal profit is the motive. I believe the best answer to all three questions is a clear, simple “No”. **This project should be stopped now so the concerned residents, homeowners, and visitors to the Bear Lake Valley do not need to continue for years through the FERC process fighting this ridiculous proposed energy project.**

**We invite you to come to the area—particularly if you are not familiar with the pristine, azure-blue Bear Lake water. We would be honored to host you and provide you with more information and a tour of the affected areas.**

Above all, we ask for your **immediate action to terminate this project as soon as you have obtained enough information to confirm its detrimental impacts to Bear Lake’s unique water, the Bear Lake Valley’s burgeoning economy, and Utah generally. We must “pull the plug” before getting hooked** into a project that, although it might create significant financial gain for a few, would occur at the expense of many others for years to come. Perhaps this is a case where if the mandate from the **Utah Legislature were modified to include impacts to ecological and natural resource considerations, then SITLA** could be instrumental in preventing irresponsible land uses—instead of seeking only to maximize revenue.

While this is a **most ill-conceived and irrational man-made structure of significant magnitude, it is possible your focused efforts to review the issues and quickly act on extinguishing this project would be the most effective political action I have ever witnessed.** A few hours of your time spent now could prevent now thousands (and in time, tens of thousands of those passionate about preserving Bear Lake) from wasting hundreds to thousands of hours fighting this ridiculous project. The time you would save us fighting Symbiotics is **time which**

**would be otherwise spent on much more productive activities contributing to the Utah economy.**

Closing on a personal note, **I respectfully appreciate the competent job you are doing as Utah's governor.** I certainly realize we require electrical energy to maintain our lifestyle. Some of us realize we could all do more to live more frugally and conserve energy—for example, adjusting the thermostats on the air conditioner in the summer months. I applaud your efforts to educate and involve the public on these issues. Further, with a growing population, I realize energy development is required in addition to conservation. No less, **energy development must be done with a greater respect for natural resources.**

Looking forward to your response,

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