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## **Interior Department and State of California Announce Support for the Salton Sea**

*Assistance will improve air and water quality and fish and wildlife habitat*

**LAKE TAHOE, CALIFORNIA** – Following President Obama’s remarks earlier today at the [Annual Lake Tahoe Summit on climate and conservation challenges](#), Deputy Secretary of the Interior Michael Connor and State of California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) to strengthen coordination of management activities to benefit the Salton Sea, boost the region’s climate resilience, spur the region’s economic growth, and improve public health.

The MOU provides a framework for collaboration through 2026, with Interior and the State of California working towards the state-identified goal of up to 25,000 acres of resource mitigation. The effort will ensure coordination of activities within the federal and State partnership to facilitate projects in a timely manner to improve air and water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, existing obligations to Native American communities, and collaboration of scientific research efforts.

“Our partnership at the Salton Sea will bring real benefits to this vital California resource and provide stability for surrounding communities,” said Deputy Secretary Connor. “The federal government will continue to work with our partners on our shared interests by identifying innovative approaches to help the State find a path forward to a sustainable Salton Sea.”

“We welcome the commitments and investments from the federal government to augment the significant resources and state investments we are making, as well as their support of our program to help avert an environmental and public health crisis at the Salton Sea,” said California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird. “The state of California has committed more than \$80 million in voter-approved bond funds to restore habitat and suppress dust at the lake in the near term, but greater investment by multiple agencies will be needed. Today’s agreement between the State and U.S. Department of Interior moves us closer to the level of investment and participation it will take to protect public health and the ecological values threatened by a receding Salton Sea.”

The Salton Sea, located in California's Imperial and Riverside counties, is the State's largest lake. The Sea faces a critical tipping point in environmental degradation. If action is not taken to manage the Sea, the air quality is likely to decline to levels that jeopardize public health, and California will lose critically important Pacific Flyway habitat for waterfowl and shorebirds.

The MOU affirms California's leading role in resource mitigation and a commitment by the State and Interior that will further the objectives established by Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.'s Salton Sea Task Force. The federal investment will direct resources to include continued scientific monitoring, technical assistance in permitting and projects, and improved on-farm activities.

The Salton Sea currently supports a robust tilapia population which provides a vital stop for migratory birds along the Pacific Flyway. This terminal lake is sustained by agricultural runoff, which has been declining, resulting in a host of environmental and economic issues. Air and water quality has degraded, as has critical fish, avian, and wildlife habitat. Socio-economic conditions for surrounding communities have been affected by the Sea's condition. Current conditions are not sustainable and present many challenges, some of which the resources provided by the MOU will be able to address.

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