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NEWS RELEASE
March 26, 2013
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Initial Willard Bay Water Samples show no threat to human health or environment

Salt Lake City, Utah – Division of Water Quality (DWQ) scientists have been collecting water samples at Willard Bay Reservoir since a Chevron pipeline leaked diesel fuel a week ago Monday. Newly available preliminary data shows a few detections of trace amounts of hydrocarbons but these trace amounts pose no threat to aquatic life or to the public from contact with the water.

Out of 27 samples taken in proximity of the spill, only four of the samples detected trace amounts of hydrocarbons. These four "hits" were found just outside of the containment booms in the reservoir and should have no impact to Willard Bay Reservoir nor the Great Salt Lake and its refuges and wetlands that are critical to migratory species.

"The data available now is preliminary and is helping frame the overall picture of the spill and its impact. It's too early to say with certainty what the trends are, but we will continue to monitor daily," said John Whitehead, assistant director of DWQ.

"The low concentrations of hydrocarbons do not pose a concern to human health or aquatic life" added DWQ Toxicologist Chris Bittner. "Based on our preliminary data, use of the reservoir water as a drinking water source, and any recreational uses such as swimming and fishing are safe. We were fortunate that the migratory birds that use the Willard Bay wetland haven't arrived yet. We will continue monitoring until the contamination is gone."

Raw sampling data is being compiled and will be posted on DEQ's Web page as it becomes available, along with updated information about the cleanup activities, at: http://www.deq.utah.gov/locations/willardbay/willardbay.htm.

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