Oregon
John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

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Oregon County Emergency Managers:

2014 is shaping up to be a very dry year. OEM is working with counties and our state counterparts in preparing to develop and process county drought disaster applications

There have been changes to the federal USDA drought secretarial disaster process brought about in 2013. The federal drought process is automatic now. Using the U.S. Drought Monitor (http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/), a drought declaration is granted if a county is under intensity value D2 (Severe Drought) for eight consecutive weeks. Also, if a county has any of its area in a drought intensity value of D3 (Extreme Drought) or higher at any time during the growing season, it would be designated as a drought disaster area. Counties that are contiguous to declaration issued counties are also granted federal drought benefits.

The state drought declaration process for counties remains the same. I want to emphasize that the state and federal drought declarations are different. A state drought declaration enables counties to benefit from emergency streamlined water rights programs, ground water usage programs and other programs that can help your citizens. It is important to submit county drought disaster declarations to enact these emergency provisions for your county.

Please note that, based on the new USDA federal disaster declaration process; it is no longer necessary to ask the Governor to request a federal declaration. Attached with this letter is an information document that explains state programs and resources available.

State of Oregon Three Step Drought Declaration Process:

1. The county commissioners request by letter that the Governor declare a "drought emergency" "due to severe and continuing drought conditions.
   - This letter asks the Governor for a specific action, such as support for voluntary conservation or curtailment measures, etc. (a template is attached at the end of this document).

2. Copies of county requests will be forwarded to the Office of Emergency Management who forwards to the State Drought Council to provide recommendations and action.

3. A State Drought Council meeting is then held to discuss climate and water conditions and to make a recommendation on the county request.
   - These recommendations will be submitted to the Governor's Office via the Governor's Natural Resource Advisor, to advise the Governor to approve or deny the request, or to continue monitoring the drought situation in the county.

Please feel free to contact me at any time if you have any additional questions or need assistance with a country drought declaration.

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Sample Drought Declaration

BEFORE THE COUNTY COURT
FOR YOUR COUNTY, OREGON

In the matter of:	**)**
Declaration of Local Disaster and Request to	**)**
Declare a State Drought Emergency	**)**
for YOUR County, Oregon	**)**

WHEREAS, on this XX day of MONTH YEAR, the YOUR County Court finds that the YOUR County agricultural and livestock industries, and related economy are suffering widespread and severe economic damage, potential injuries and loss of property resulting from extreme weather conditions within the county; and

WHEREAS, annual water supplies available for irrigators and ranchers within YOUR County are a function of both available water storage in the YOUR COUNTY River and in various reservoirs (LIST RESERVOIRS), and the estimated seasonal inflow from winter snow pack. The US Bureau of Reclamation has estimated the MONTH 1 through MONTH 2 YEAR stream flow forecasts to be below average. For the main tributaries in YOUR County the run off forecast is XX% of average. As of DATE storage for the reservoirs was below average and only XX% of capacity. Water supplies are in serious jeopardy; and

WHEREAS, YOUR County has approximately XX acres of irrigated ground from stored water. XX acres will be out of water between DATES. IRRIGATION DISTRICT NAME in the amount of XX irrigated acres was out of water around DATE. About XX acres in other outlying areas will be out of water this week; and

WHEREAS, many long-time YOUR County farmers and ranchers have commented that they have not seen water conditions this severe since DATE; and

WHEREAS, the extended weather forecast for YOUR County projects higher than normal temperatures, and below average precipitation; and

WHEREAS, the above conditions result in loss of economic stability, pasture shortages, decrease in feed production, shortened growing season, and decreased water supplies for YOUR County agricultural and livestock producers. In addition, this multi-year cumulative drought has resulted in decreased fuel moisture and early onset fire danger; and

WHEREAS, in 2012 Southern YOUR County experienced a devastating and large wildfire YOUR County still suffers from its effects; and

WHEREAS, the YOUR County Court determines that extraordinary measures must be taken to alleviate suffering of people and livestock and to protect or mitigate economic loss, and to be responsive to the threat of wildfires.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the YOUR County Court that:

1. A local disaster is declared within YOUR County.
2. The YOUR County drought Emergency Management Plan has been implemented.
3. Pursuant to ORS 401.165, we find that appropriate response is beyond the capability of YOUR County. We are declaring a state of emergency for the purpose of assessment, evaluation and acquiring the ability to provide appropriate available resources.

4. **Request**: The Honorable GOVERNORS NAME, Governor of Oregon, declare a Drought Emergency for all of YOUR County under the provisions of ORS 401.165 due to severe and continuing drought conditions beginning at this time and continuing for an unknown period of time; **and** direct the Oregon Department of Water Resources to make available in YOUR County: Temporary Transfers of Water Rights, and Emergency Water Use Permits, and Use of Existing Right Option/Agreement; **and** other federal and state drought assistance and programs as needed.

5. This proclamation shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.

_____
County Judge or Commissioner NAME

_____
County Commissioner NAME

_____
County Commissioner NAME