

JANICE K. BREWER
Governor



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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

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May 23, 2011

Mr. Kevin Kinsall, Natural Resources Policy Advisor
Office of Governor Jan Brewer
1700 West Washington
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Re: Recommendation to Maintain Drought Emergency Declaration and the Drought Declaration Issued by Executive Order 2007-10

Dear Mr. Kinsall:

The Governor's Drought Interagency Coordinating Group (ICG)* met on May 9, 2011 to discuss drought conditions throughout Arizona, and recommended that the state's Drought Emergency Declaration (PCA 99006) and Drought Declaration for the State of Arizona (Executive Order 2007-10) be continued.

During the May meeting, reports were provided by the Salt River Project (SRP) on the Salt and Verde watersheds, the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) on the Colorado River basin, the State Drought Monitoring Technical Committee on climate conditions, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) on forage, stock ponds and crops. A few of the main points are described below and form the basis of the ICG's recommendation:

- Although the Verde and Salt reservoir systems are currently 86% full and increases in the Colorado River reservoirs will forestall drought-related water rationing in Arizona until 2015 or later, data show that much of the state remains in drought conditions.
- Normal to extreme long-term drought conditions occur across the state, with the driest conditions in the southeastern part of the state. Only Mohave County and the western edge of La Paz County are characterized as not experiencing drought at this time.
- Of the previous four years, only 2010 was a wetter than average year and did not reverse the effects of the previous dry years. In fact, long-term drought status is worse for most watersheds.
- According to the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) Field Offices, less than 64% of normal forage production will occur in 2011. They also reported shortages in livestock water around the state and irrigation water shortages that could result in crop production losses ranging from 10 to 80 percent. In addition to poor rangeland

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conditions, native desert vegetation also exhibits signs of stress, especially in the western and southern counties.

The updates confirmed that although reservoirs supplying western and central Arizona are adequate, all of Arizona's watersheds except the Lower Gila and Lower Colorado remain in long-term drought. Based on this information, the ICG made a unanimous decision to recommend that both drought declarations be kept in place:

- Drought Emergency Declaration (PCA 99006) has been in effect since June 1999 and maintains the state's ability to provide emergency response if needed. It also enables farmers and ranchers to obtain funding assistance through the Farm Service Agency if they experience production losses due to drought.
- The Drought Declaration for the State of Arizona (Executive Order 2007-10) was issued in May 2007 to raise awareness of Arizona's continuing long-term drought and encourage conservation.

If you need additional information or would like a briefing, please contact me at (602) 771-8589 or by e-mail at sfabritz@azwater.gov.

Sincerely,



Sandra Fabritz-Whitney

Enclosures:

PCA 99006

Executive Order 2003-12

Executive Order 2007-10

*The ICG is an advisory body to the governor on Arizona drought issues. Comprised of state, federal, tribal and non-governmental organizations, this group meets in the spring and fall to evaluate drought conditions and consider recommendations to the governor. The ICG is an important part of the state's overall drought preparedness strategy, as described in the *Arizona Drought Preparedness Plan*.