



WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

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October 24, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Bush,

On behalf of the Western Governors' Association, we are writing to thank you for authorizing the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) last year and to urge you to include full funding for NIDIS in your FY 2009 budget request at the authorized level of \$13 million.

Full funding for NIDIS will be crucial in allowing NOAA—working in partnership with other federal agencies, states, tribes and local governments—to implement NIDIS. As the priority for implementation, NOAA plans on establishing the NIDIS drought early warning pilots in various key watersheds and states. These pilots are intended to become the operational drought early warning system, and will chart a collective national pathway to inform other regions of the country of the best practices to establish the integrated system.

We would suggest that funding NIDIS is consistent with your August 14, 2007, Memorandum on *FY 2009 Administration Research and Development Budget Priorities*. In particular, NIDIS is consistent with the Administration's priority to "improve our ability to understand and respond to climate change and other global environmental issues and natural disasters through better observation, data, analysis, models, and basic and social science research."

In advance, thank you for considering our request for full funding of NIDIS in your FY 2009 budget request. We stand ready to assist with implementation of NIDIS.

Sincerely,

M. Michael Rounds
Governor of South Dakota
Lead Governor on Drought

Bill Richardson
Governor of New Mexico
Lead Governor on Drought

Brian Schweitzer
Governor of Montana
Lead Governor on Drought

cc: The Honorable Carlos Gutierrez, Department of Commerce
The Honorable Jim Nussle, OMB
The Honorable Conrad Lautenbacher, NOAA