



GARY MAST
President

August 1, 2003

The Honorable Pete V. Domenici
United States Senate
SH-328 Hart Building
Washington D.C. 20510

The Honorable Max Baucus
United States Senate
SH-511 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Alcee L. Hastings
United State House of Representatives
2235 Rayburn Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dennis Rehberg
United State House of Representatives
516 Cannon Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators and Representatives:

The nation's 3,000 conservation districts commend you for your vision and foresight in introducing the National Drought Preparedness Act of 2003.

The United States often suffers serious economic and environmental losses from severe regional droughts but has no national policy to ensure an integrated and coordinated federal strategy to respond to drought emergencies. Even though historically there have been frequent and significant droughts of national consequence, drought has been addressed primarily through special legislation and makeshift action rather than through a systematic and permanent process. State, tribal and local governments have to deal individually and separately with each federal agency involved in drought monitoring, planning, mitigation and response. Crop and pasture losses, fire and dust storms cause significant environmental and economic disruption in many areas of the nation that currently are experiencing substantial drought conditions.

Conservation districts support the approaches to address this void proposed in S. 1454 and H.R. 2871, and look forward to selecting a representative to participate on the National Drought Council. It is crucial for our nation to have a coordinated national policy on drought that will result from this legislation. We are poised to help in any way we can to get this important legislation enacted this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gary Mast". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical line.

Gary Mast

National Association of Conservation Districts

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