



WESTERN STATES WATER COUNCIL

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Web Page: www.westgov.org/wswc

August 6, 2003

The Honorable FIELD(first name) FIELD(last name)
U.S. House of Representatives
FIELD(address)
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative FIELD(last name):

On behalf of the Western States Water Council, I am writing to declare our support for passage of the National Drought Preparedness Act of 2003, introduced on July 24th by Senator Pete Domenici of New Mexico and Rep. Alcee Hastings of Florida respectively as S.1454 and H.R.2871. The Council strongly supports enactment of this important legislation and urges all western congressional members to join as cosponsors. With extended drought conditions afflicting many parts of the West, federal legislation is needed to promote coordination of proactive measures at all levels of government to plan, prepare and mitigate the serious impacts of drought. Western governors helped draft this legislation and have called on the Congress and the President to support its enactment.

The Western States Water Council is an organization representing eighteen states. Its members are appointed by their respective governors to address a broad range of water policy issues affecting the West. Much of the West is characterized by its aridity. Water is scarce. Its availability continues to circumscribe our economic and environmental well being and quality of life. Drought is a continuous threat. The Council has been actively involved in drought management and policy since 1976, when it served the governors as a regional coordinating body for drought relief efforts and a clearinghouse for information on drought conditions. Western states learned from that experience, and began developing drought response plans for the future. There is no doubt that timely, effective government action at the federal, state, local and tribal levels to prevent or mitigate drought impacts can significantly reduce the effects of drought and the need for relief expenditures. This legislation would help states develop and implement drought preparedness plans.

On July 24th, Governor Judy Martz of Montana, as Chair of the Western Governors' Association, joined by Governor Bill Richardson of New Mexico and Mike Johanns of Nebraska as co-lead governors for drought, wrote "It is high time for our nation to have a comprehensive national policy for drought.... We call on the Congress and the President to enact this bill this year." We join the western governors in urging the Congress and the Administration to enact and implement this legislation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl Dreher', written over a horizontal line.

Karl Dreher, Chairman
Western States Water Council