



# DOUGLAS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**May 13, 2020**

## **Douglas County Approves Emergency Drought Order**

(Douglas County, Ore.) Drought continues to spread across southern Oregon, as Douglas County is the fourth county to declare a drought order this year. On May 13, 2020, Douglas County Public Works Director, Scott Adams, presented and received approval from the Douglas County Board of Commissioners, at the weekly business meeting for an emergency drought order. Oregon's Governor has already declared State of Drought Emergencies in Jackson and Curry Counties, and Coos County has a pending order request in front of the Governor.

Upon official recording of the order, the Douglas County Board of Commissioners will send the order to Oregon's Governor, requesting an official emergency drought declaration from the state for Douglas County. The order cited below average precipitation; lack of snow pack; low stream flows; higher than normal temperatures; agricultural, livestock and forest economic hardships and potential for serious injury and losses, resulting from extreme weather conditions in the county, as the basis for the request.

As of May 4, 2020, Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) water conditions report stated the Umpqua Basin stream flows are 67% of average. Snowpack, according to most recent Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) report states part of southwestern Oregon, including the Umpqua Basin snow water equivalent (SWE) remains well below normal. As of May 1, the basin snowpack was 43% of normal, which is significantly lower than the prior month when the snowpack was 75% of normal. The report also indicates that April precipitation was 41% of average, and since October 1, 2019, it has been 65% of average.

As of April 28, 2020, the U.S. Drought Monitor for Oregon, illustrates the majority of Douglas County is in severe drought. The most recent three-month outlook prepared by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Climate Prediction Center (NOAA) indicates, "an increased probability of above-normal temperatures along with below-normal precipitation". This could dramatically increase wild land fire danger.

*"The Douglas County Board of Commissioners agree that measures must be taken to alleviate stress to citizens, farmland, forestry and livestock, to protect or mitigate economic loss, and to be responsive to the threat of wildfires,"* commented Commissioner Tom Kress.

Although the drought declaration has not resulted in any residential use restrictions, it is a good reminder that water conservation is always a good idea and that fire danger is likely to be high in many parts of Douglas County this summer.

The Governor's drought declaration will allow increased flexibility in how water is managed to ensure that limited supplies are used as efficiently as possible. The Governor's drought declaration will also authorize state agencies to expedite water management tools to users who would not otherwise have access.

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