

**BEFORE THE COUNTY COURT
FOR MALHEUR COUNTY, OREGON**

In the matter of:)
Declaration of Local Disaster and Request to)
Governor Brown to Declare a State Drought Emergency)
for Malheur County)

WHEREAS, on this 4th day of March 2015, the Malheur County Court finds that the Malheur County agricultural and livestock industries, and related economy are suffering widespread and severe economic damage, potential injuries and loss of property resulting from extreme weather conditions within the county; and

WHEREAS, the Malheur County Court declared a drought disaster in June 2013 and 2014. Conditions are more bleak now than in both June 2013 and 2014; and

WHEREAS, this is the fourth consecutive year of low snow pack and below average water run off. The depletion of water storage is also historically high; and

WHEREAS, annual water supplies available for irrigators and ranchers within Malheur County are a function of both available water storage in the Malheur and Owyhee Rivers and in various reservoirs (the largest three being Beulah, Warm Springs and Owyhee), and the estimated seasonal inflow from winter snow pack. The US Bureau of Reclamation has estimated the January through July 2015 stream flow forecasts to be extremely below average. Storage for the reservoirs is below average and water supplies are in serious jeopardy. Drought monitor is currently at D3 – indicating Extreme Drought; and

WHEREAS, with current snow pack and forecast runoff all storage water is estimated to be depleted by early summer 2015. The Lake Owyhee Project estimates that 50,000 irrigated acres may not receive any water or suffer extreme depletion of water. In 2014, irrigation districts throughout Malheur County ran out of water before the end of July. Combined snow pack and storage water levels are currently less than what existed in 2014 and therefore it is estimated water will run out before the end of July 2015; and

WHEREAS, water conditions were severe in 2014 (worse on record for Malheur County) as it affected more landowners than the drought in 1992 when irrigation districts run out of water on June 10; and

WHEREAS, the extended weather forecast for Malheur County projects higher than normal temperatures, and below average precipitation; and

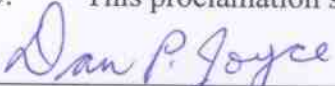
WHEREAS, the above conditions result in loss of economic stability, pasture shortages, decrease in feed production, shortened growing season, and decreased water supplies for Malheur County agricultural and livestock producers. In addition, this multi-year cumulative drought has resulted in decreased fuel moisture and early onset fire danger; and

WHEREAS, in 2012 Southern Malheur County experienced a devastating and large wildfire. Malheur County still suffers from its effects; and

WHEREAS, the Malheur County Court determines that extraordinary measures must be taken to alleviate suffering of people and livestock and to protect or mitigate economic loss, and to be responsive to the threat of wildfires.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED by the Malheur County Court that:


1. A local disaster is declared within Malheur County.
2. The Malheur County drought Emergency Management Plan has been implemented.
3. Pursuant to ORS 401.015 (2), we find that appropriate response is beyond the capability of Malheur County. We are declaring a state of emergency for the purpose of assessment, evaluation and acquiring the ability to provide appropriate available resources.
4. **Request:** The Honorable Kate Brown, Governor of Oregon, declare a Drought Emergency for all of Malheur County under the provisions of ORS 401.055 due to severe and continuing drought conditions beginning at this time and continuing for an unknown period of time; **and** direct the Oregon Department of Water Resources to make available in Malheur County: Temporary Transfers of Water Rights, and Emergency Water Use Permits, and Use of Existing Right Option/Agreement; **and** other federal and state drought assistance and programs as needed.
5. This proclamation shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.



County Judge Dan P. Joyce



County Commissioner Don Hodge



County Commissioner Larry Wilson