

**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR JOSEPHINE COUNTY STATE
OF OREGON**

IN THE MATTER OF THE DECLARATION OF)
A STATE OF DROUGHT EMERGENCY FOR) **RESOLUTION NO. 2015-017**
JOSEPHINE COUNTY, OREGON)

WHEREAS ORS 401.305 provides authority for Josephine County to act as an emergency management agency and to establish policies and protocols for defining and directing responsibilities during time of emergency; and

WHEREAS pursuant to ORS Chapter 401 and the Charter for Josephine County, the Board of Commissioners has enacted Resolution 2011-020, which provides executive responsibility in times of emergency and which provides the procedures for declaring a State of Emergency; and

WHEREAS the Josephine County Board of Commissioners finds that there is the potential for the Josephine County agricultural and livestock industries, and recreational, river, tourism, and related economies to experience widespread and severe economic damage and injury resulting from extreme weather conditions within the County; and

WHEREAS annual water supplies available for irrigators and ranchers within Josephine County are a function of available water in the Rogue, Applegate, and Illinois Rivers and their tributaries, and in the Lost Creek and Applegate Reservoirs; and

WHEREAS, the United States Department of Agriculture has estimated that in this water year, from October 1, 2014 through May 3, 2015, the Rogue Basin is at 14 percent of total average snowpack and only 89 percent of total average precipitation; and

WHEREAS Josephine County has approximately 46,690 acres of land that under irrigation, and many farmers, ranchers, and vineyards rely solely upon these sources, which are not augmented by local reservoirs; and the tributaries to the Rogue, Illinois and Applegate Rivers are in extreme jeopardy of drying, as they rely upon annual snowpack to run; and

WHEREAS local water experts proclaim that this may be the driest year in the past 30 years and the lowest snowpack of record in Josephine County; and the extended weather forecast for Josephine County projects higher than normal temperatures and below average precipitation; and

WHEREAS the above conditions result in loss of economic stability for agriculture, recreation, and tourism industries, pasture shortages, decrease in feed production, shortened growing season, and decreased water supplies for Josephine County agricultural, vineyard, and livestock producers; and

WHEREAS this multi-year cumulative drought has resulted in decreased fuel moisture and early onset fire danger; and

WHEREAS Josephine County continues to experience large wildfires, which significantly impact the county and its residents both during the event and for several subsequent years; and

WHEREAS, the Josephine County Board of Commissioners determines that extraordinary measures must be taken to alleviate suffering of people and livestock, to protect or mitigate economic loss, and to be responsive to the threat of wildfires; and

WHEREAS, the Josephine County Board of Commissioners requests special preference for domestic water use; and

WHEREAS all available resources have been expended to respond to the drought emergency;

NOW, THEREFORE,

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Josephine County Board of Commissioners formally declares a State of Emergency for Josephine County, effective this 6 day of May, 2015, for all areas of Josephine County, including the incorporated cities of Grants Pass and Cave Junction; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that upon this Declaration of a State of Emergency, the Emergency Services Program Manager of Josephine County shall have authority to respond to the emergency and implement the Josephine County Emergency Operations Plan pursuant to Resolution No. 2011-020; and

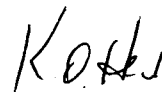
IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the County Emergency Manager or her designee shall take all necessary steps authorized by law to coordinate response and recovery from this emergency, including but not limited to requesting assistance from the State of Oregon; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that pursuant to ORS 401.165, the Board of Commissioners requests that the Honorable Kate Brown, Governor of Oregon, declare a Drought Emergency for all of Josephine County due to severe and continuing drought conditions; and that the Oregon Department of Water Resources make available in Josephine County: Temporary Transfers of Water Rights, Emergency Water Use Permits, and Use of Existing Right Option/Agreement, and other Federal and State drought assistance and programs as needed; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that all emergency purchasing provisions of the Emergency Operations Plan shall become immediately effective until termination of the State of Emergency or until further order of the Board of Commissioners.

DATED this 6 day of May, 2015

**JOSEPHINE COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**



K. O. Heck, Chair



Cheryl Walker, Vice-Chair



Simon Hare, Commissioner



Josephine County Board of Commissioners
*Keith Heck, Chair * Cherryl Walker, Vice Chair * Simon G. Hare, Commissioner*

May 6, 2015

Governor Kate Brown
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301-4047

Office of Emergency Management
Andrew Phelps, Director
PO Box 14370
Salem, OR 97309

RE: Josephine County Drought Declaration of Emergency

Dear Governor Brown:

Josephine County, by and through its Board of County Commissioners, requests the approval of the attached Emergency Drought Declaration for all of Josephine County under the provisions of ORS 401.165 as a direct result of "Severe and Continuing Drought Conditions" to begin immediately and continue for an unspecified period of time.

As you are aware, there is the potential for the Josephine County agricultural and livestock industries, and recreational, river, tourism, and related economies to experience widespread and severe economic damage and injury resulting from extreme weather conditions within the County. Annual water supplies available for irrigators and ranchers within Josephine County are a function of available water in the Rogue, Applegate, and Illinois Rivers and their tributaries, and in the Lost Creek and Applegate Reservoirs. Annual water year to date snowpack is currently estimated at only 14% of average. As of March 3rd, the 2014-2015 precipitation was only 89% of normal.

A county-wide Declaration of a Drought Emergency was made on May 6, 2015. Our initial assessment of impacts indicates severe losses and damages are imminent to the agricultural economy of the county.

As a result of the severity and magnitude associated with multiple years of reduced precipitation and snowfall, the Josephine County Board of Commissioners has determined that proper and effective response is beyond the capabilities of Josephine County and other affected local governments. Supplementary State and Federal assistance is needed. We extend in advance our appreciation for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Board of County Commissioners

K. O. Heck, Chair

Cherryl Walker, Vice Chair

Simon G. Hare, Commissioner

cc: Jackson County BOC

COURTHOUSE

500 N.W. Sixth Street, Dept. 6, Grants Pass, Oregon 97526 * Phone: (541) 474-5221 Fax: (541) 474-5105