



Board of Commissioners

Courthouse, Room 110
225 W. Olive Street
Newport, Oregon 97365
(541) 265-4100
FAX (541) 265-4176

August 1, 2018

Dr. Brenda Bateman
Technical Services Division Administrator
Oregon Water Resources Department
Co-Chair, Oregon Drought Readiness Council
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A
Salem, Oregon 97301
Via E-Mail: brenda.o.bateman@regon.gov

Ms. Sonya Andron
Operations and Preparedness Manager
Oregon Office of Emergency Management
Co-Chair Oregon Drought Readiness Council
PO Box 14370
Salem, Oregon 97301
Via E-Mail: Sonya.Andron@state.or.us

RE: Lincoln County Drought

Dear Dr. Bateman and Ms. Andron:

Lincoln County, Oregon, by and through its County Elected Officials, requests that Governor Brown issue an executive order for all of Lincoln County under the provisions of ORS Chapter 536 as a direct result of severe and continuing drought conditions.

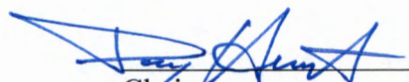
There is the potential for Lincoln County agricultural and livestock, natural resources, recreational, tourism and related economies to experience widespread and severe damage resulting from extremely dry weather conditions within the county. Already one of the largest County farming concerns, Gibson Farms, has received a notice halting junior water right withdrawals from the Siletz River at a time when major watering of producing crops including blueberries is needed. This usually occurs much later in the year even in dry conditions.

The County will formally declare a drought and forward to you a copy of the Resolution for your files. The County Fire Defense Board and Board of Commissioners have already banned all fires (including charcoal BBQs) countywide because of the extremely dry conditions.

Lincoln County has determined that additional action by and support from the state is needed. This may include assistance from the Oregon Water Resources Department and other Oregon executive branch agencies, operating within their statutory authorities.

Lincoln County Board of Commissioners therefore requests an executive order from the Governor, declaring drought in Lincoln County. Thank you in advance for your consideration and assistance in this request.

Lincoln County Board of Commissioners


Chair


Commissioner


Commissioner

1
2 **BEFORE THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**
3 **FOR LINCOLN COUNTY, OREGON**
4

5 In the Matter of:) **ORDER NO. 8-18-197**
6 *Declaration of Local Disaster and Request*)
7 *To Declare a State Drought Emergency*)
8 *For Lincoln County, Oregon*)
9

10 WHEREAS, on this 8st day of August, 2018, the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners finds
11 that the Lincoln County agricultural industries, and related economy are suffering widespread
12 and severe economic damage, potential injuries and loss of property resulting from extreme
13 weather conditions within the County; and
14

15 WHEREAS, annual water supplies available for farm, forest, recreation and natural uses within
16 Lincoln County are a function of available water in the Siletz River and in various tributaries and
17 other rivers' water supplies are in serious jeopardy; and
18

19 WHEREAS, many long-time Lincoln County water users and observers have commented that
20 they have not seen water conditions this severe in decades. A Notice to Halt Withdrawal of
21 Junior Water Rights for Irrigation from the Siletz River was served on one large farm operation,
22 Gibson Farms, significantly earlier than "normal" low flow periods. This producer of
23 blueberries still has 80% of its crop still in production needing water; and
24

25 WHEREAS, the extended weather forecast for Lincoln County projects higher than normal
26 temperatures, and below average precipitation. Anecdotal information is that flows on the Siletz
27 River are near historic low levels for this time of year and flirting with the levels in 2015 when
28 Lincoln County was last included in a drought declaration; and
29

30 WHEREAS, the above conditions result in loss of economic stability, lost growing season, and
31 decreased water supplies for Lincoln County agricultural producers. In addition this cumulative
32 drought has resulted in decreased fuel moisture and early onset fire danger. The Lincoln County
33 Fire Defense Board has already declared an unprecedented complete burn ban (*all burning*)
34 countywide; and
35

36 WHEREAS, the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners determines that extraordinary
37 measures must be taken to alleviate suffering of people, natural resources and to protect or
38 mitigate economic loss, and to be responsive to the threat of wildfires.

39
40 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDERED by the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners that:

- 41
- 42 1. A local disaster is declared within Lincoln County.
 - 43
 - 44 2. Pursuant to ORS 401.015(2), we find that appropriate response is beyond the capability of
45 Lincoln County. We are declaring a state of emergency for the purpose of assessment,
46 evaluation and acquiring the ability to provide appropriate available resources.
 - 47
 - 48 3. Request: The Honorable Kate Brown, Governor of Oregon, declare a Drought
49 Emergency for all of Lincoln County under the provisions of ORS 401.055 due to severe and
50 continuing drought conditions beginning at this time and continuing for an unknown period
51 of time; and direct the Oregon Department of Water Resources to make available in Lincoln
52 County appropriate and available tools and resources to alleviate drought conditions and
53 impacts and to provide other federal and state drought assistance and programs as needed.
 - 54
 - 55 4. This Order shall take effect immediately.
 - 56

Dated this 8th Day of August, 2018

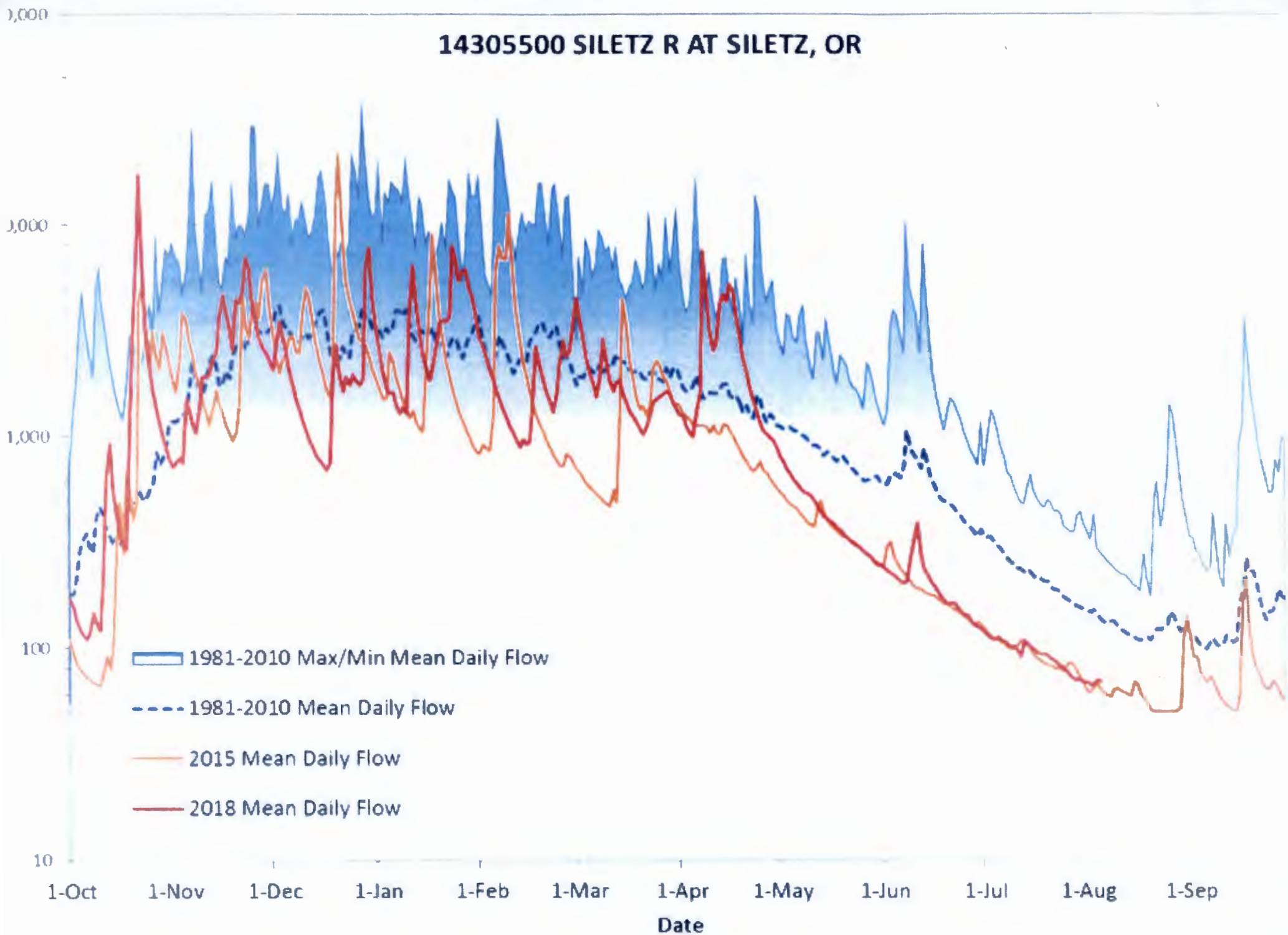
LINCOLN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS


Chair


Commissioner


Commissioner

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August 7, 2018

Lincoln County Board of Commissioners
225 West Olive Street, Room 110
Newport, Oregon 97365

VIA EMAIL: cehall@co.lincoln.or.us; dhunt@co.lincoln.or.us; tthompson@co.lincoln.or.us

RE: *Drought Declaration for Lincoln County*

Dear Commissioners:

The Oregon Farm Bureau (“OFB”) and Lincoln County Farm Bureau (“LCFB”) write to support a drought declaration for Lincoln County. Current data shows that Lincoln County is in the midst of a severe drought, with much lower than average rainfall and higher than average temperatures this summer. This has led to Lincoln County experiencing lower than average streamflow this summer, leading to a call on water rights necessary for agricultural operations.

Agriculture is a main economic driver in Lincoln County, contributing over \$5 million annually to the state’s economy in crop and livestock sales.¹ Small woodlands and livestock are the main agricultural commodities in the region, though cropland and other uses makes up about 17% of the county’s agricultural land use, including blueberries, vegetables, nursery stock, Christmas trees, and other water dependent crops. We understand that many of these crops are not fully harvested

As of July 14, 2018

Author: Chris Fenimore, NC I/NI SDS/NMA



Drought Conditions: Percentages

Week	None	D0	D1-D2	D3	D4
Current 7/31/2018	0.00%	100.00%	46.94%	35.50%	2.00%
Last Week 7/24/2018	0.02%	0.45	82.70%	13.58%	0.00%
Three Months Ago 5/01/2018	12.50%	67.16%	18.11%	0.00%	0.00%
Start of Calendar Year 1/02/2018	1.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
One Year Ago 8/01/2017	54.32%	45.48%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%

Drought Intensity

None: No Drought
D0: Abnormally Dry

D1: Moderate Drought
D2: Severe Drought

D3: Extreme Drought
D4: Exceptional Drought



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu>

¹ https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/County_Profiles/Oregon/cp41041.pdf

and need continued irrigation through the irrigation season to stay viable. This includes local u-pick blueberry operations and other local commodities important to local businesses and tourism in the county.

As a local cattle rancher, I can attest that the lack of moisture this year is having a significant impact on my farm and other cattle ranchers around the county. For only the third time in the history of my operation, I will have to feed hay to my cattle starting in August and continuing until the fall rains arrive and the grass begins growing again. I am well-established and can handle this additional burden, but it will be a real hardship for many producers. A drought declaration could allow them and other farmers the relief that will enable them to stay in operation.

A drought declaration would enable farmers to move water rights from less valuable commodities and properties to the properties that most need the water in a timely fashion, and open up a number of state water management tools that can move forward on expedited timeframes to address the drought emergency.

Given the severe drought conditions in Lincoln County, we support the request of your local farmers for Lincoln County to declare a drought and send a request to the state Drought Readiness Council and the Governor's office for a state drought declaration.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the drought conditions in Lincoln County and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

/s/ Tim Miller

Tim Miller
President, Lincoln County Farm Bureau
tmillerfarms@gmail.com

Mary Anne Cooper
Public Policy Counsel
Oregon Farm Bureau Federation
(503) 399-1701 x 306
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