



# HARNEY COUNTY COURT

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RE: Harney County Drought

Date: April 13, 2023

Mr. Andrews and Ms. Naile:

Please find a revised Resolution #2023-10-Declaring A State of Drought Emergency in Harney County attached to this letter due to a clerical error.

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

Harney 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 Harney County.

Annual water supplies available for irrigators and ranchers within Harney County are from winter snow pack which is while up this year we are still listed in extreme drought and we have had long term severe temperature impacts in the Harney Basin. Those conditions result in loss of economic stability, pasture shortages, decrease in feed production, more calf deaths, later livestock turn-out dates, shortened growing season and decreased water supplies for Harney County agricultural and livestock producers. This also causes our natural resources, recreational, tourism, and related economies to experience widespread and severe damage resulting from extreme weather conditions within the County. In addition, if a multi-year cumulative drought occurs, it will result in decreased fuel moisture and early onset fire danger.

The county has already formally declared a drought and has attached a copy of the adopted resolution for your files. In addition, the county has taken the following actions to anticipate or mitigate effects of the drought: livestock producers are already thinning their herds which results in lost profits and will trickle to food shortages. Agricultural producers project shortages for the next season. Producers are already seeing losses in the lack of winter run-off for their normal flood irrigation and a shortened season. The lack of seasonal moisture puts the entire region in danger of wildfires.

The Harney County Court/Judge 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.

Harney County Court/Judge therefore requests an executive order from the Governor, declaring drought in Harney County.

We extend in advance our appreciation for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,



Bill Hart  
County Judge



Patty Dorroh  
Commissioner



Kristen Shelman  
Commissioner



IN THE MATTER OF DECLARING )  
A STATE OF DROUGHT EMERGENCY ) RESOLUTION #2023-10  
IN HARNEY COUNTY )

THIS BEING the 22<sup>nd</sup> Day of March, 2023 and a day set aside for a regular meeting of the Harney County Court and there being present Bill Hart, County Judge; Kristen Shelman, County Commissioner and Patty Dorroh, County Commissioner; and

WHEREAS, information has been provided to the Harney County Court that a drought is occurring in Harney County and that protective actions may be or are required to protect the citizens of Harney County;

WHEREAS, the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture has designated Harney County as a contiguous disaster county due to drought, enabling producers in the County eligible for emergency aid, with a moderate drought monitor condition;

WHEREAS, the National Drought Mitigation Center has listed a large portion of Harney County as “Extreme Drought” with smaller portions listed as “Severe Drought” as of February 17, 2023.

WHEREAS, unless weather conditions improve substantially to above normal conditions, water users who rely on stored water will have a shortened water use season, and depending upon the priority date of their water right, water users who rely on stream flows will have substantially less water available and a shortened water use season;

WHEREAS, the above conditions will result in severe economic hardship to Harney County, including shortages of livestock forage, loss of agricultural interests, and increased chance of wildfire;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. A state of emergency exists in Harney County due to drought conditions.
2. The Harney County Drought Emergency Management Plan has been implemented
3. Due to the state of emergency, the Harney County Court does hereby request and entreat the Honorable Tina Kotek, Governor of the State of Oregon, to:
  - A. Declare a “State of Emergency,” a drought, to exist in all of Harney County, Oregon under ORS 536; due to severe and continuing drought conditions beginning at this time and continuing for an unknown period of time; and Direct the Oregon Water Resources Department to provide all available means of assistance to Harney County agricultural producers: Temporary Transfers of

Water Rights, Emergency Water Use Permits, and Use of Existing Option/Agreement; and other federal and state drought assistance programs as needed.

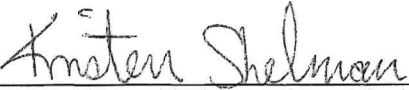
- B. Direct Office of Emergency Management to coordinate and assist as needed, to address current and projected conditions in Harney County.
- C. Direct all other state agencies to coordinate with the above agencies and to provide appropriate state resources as determined necessary to assist those affected in Harney County.

DONE AND DATED this 13th day of April 2023



**HARNEY COUNTY COURT  
HARNEY COUNTY, OREGON**

  
Bill Hart, Judge

  
Kristen Shelman, Commissioner

  
Patty Dorroh, Commissioner