

1995 Third Street
Baker City, Oregon 97814

April 28, 2022

Ryan Andrews
Hydrologist
Oregon Water Resources Department
Co-Chair, Oregon Drought Readiness Council
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A Salem, OR 97301
Via Email: ryan.m.andrews@state.or.us

Traci Naile
Response Section Manager
Oregon Office of Emergency Management
Co-Chair, Oregon Drought Readiness Council
P.O. Box 14370, Salem, OR 97301
Via Email: traci.naile@state.or.us

RE: Baker County Drought

Mr. Andrews and Ms. Naile:

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

There is the potential for the Baker County agricultural and livestock, natural resources, recreational, tourism, and related economies to experience widespread and severe damage resulting from extreme weather conditions within the county.

Winter started out looking good and precipitation is closer to average than in the years past. However, because of the past drought years the precipitation needed has to exceed the average.

The county has already formally declared a drought, and has attached a copy of the adopted resolution for your files. Producers have taken the following actions to anticipate or mitigate effects of the drought:

- Fed livestock longer to allow range land grasses to grow. Livestock turnout is being delayed. (Current precipitation and cooler temps have been helpful in some regards but have slowed the grass grow rate currently)
- Summer fallowed ground because of the lack of water, (additional acres of ground this year versus last year due to the continued drought and Phillips Reservoir being so low).


If these trends keep going the way they are producers will have less pasture for the fall and will be forced to supplement the cattle with hay (that will be difficult to obtain) to keep them going. This is because they will not be able to get the regrowth after haying due to such a reduced amount of allotted acre/feet allocation.

Baker County has been working with our local Farm Services Agency office on available programs using the Smartsheet software to help people signup and be able to move as quickly as possible to help producers.

The Baker County Board of Commissioners have 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.

Baker County Board of Commissioners, through our Emergency Management Department, therefore requests an executive order from the Governor, declaring drought in Baker County.

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



Jason Yencopal, Director
Baker County Emergency Management

COUNTY OF BAKER
BOARD of COMMISSIONERS

DECLARATION OF LOCAL DISASTER

WHEREAS, the County of Baker on this 6nd day of April, 2022 has determined that the Baker County agricultural industry, and related economy is suffering widespread and severe economic damage, potential injuries and loss of property resulting from extreme cyclical weather conditions within the county.

And

Baker County's has had an area in D3, Extreme Drought, since the beginning of the water year and has not had a piece of the county below D2 since the beginning of the water year as well.

And

Baker County has experienced several wind events that have caused localized dust storms which has continued to dry out the lower level elevations.

And

Baker County's recent snow survey showed that at our higher elevation we have 70% of normal (Anthony Lakes), at our mid elevation we have 51% of normal (Little Alps), and at our lower elevation 38% of normal (Little Antone). These seem to trend to the Powder River basin that feed Phillips Reservoir (mid county) as well as the Burnt River area (southern county).

And

Phillips Reservoir, the largest water reservoir in the county, is at 10% and contains 7524 acre feet, which is almost 50% of what it contained at this same time last year. There may be no supplemental to .2 acre foot of water available but it is too early in the season to know if the .2 will even be possible. Twenty-five percent of the land under this reservoir has changed what it normally produces. Some wheat and corn crops will be harvested early and used for "hay" instead. There is also a large percentage of land in the county that is not under a stored water project.

And

These disaster conditions have resulted in loss of economic stability, and decreased water supplies for Baker County agricultural producers.

WHEREAS, the Baker County Board of Commissioners, have determined that extraordinary measures must be taken to alleviate the 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 Baker County Board of Commissioners:

- Section 1. That a local disaster is declared within Baker County.
- Section 2. That the Baker County EOP, Drought Annex plan has been implemented.
- Section 3. That a drought declaration under Oregon Revised Statute 563 be used to allow the Water Resources Department to use a number of water-related tools that include temporary drought permits to use groundwater.
- Section 4. That this proclamation shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.
- Section 5. The Board of Commissioners, request that the Honorable Kate Brown, Governor, of the State of Oregon declare: "A Local Disaster and State of Emergency" exists in Baker County.


And

Request the Honorable, Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary, of the United States Farm Service Agency (FSA), to expedite assistance to local agricultural industries/producers who have suffered extensive and ongoing loss from the drought and associated wildfires


ORDERED this 6th day of April, 2022



William "Bill" Harvey, Chair
Board of Commissioners



Bruce Nichols
Commissioner



Mark Bennett
Commissioner