

BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

STATE OF OREGON, COUNTY OF JACKSON

IN THE MATTER OF DECLARING A LOCAL )  
DROUGHT STATE OF EMERGENCY AND )  
REQUESTING THE GOVERNOR TO DECLARE )  
A STATE DROUGHT EMERGENCY FOR )  
JACKSON COUNTY, OREGON )

ORDER NO. 78-26

WHEREAS, the Jackson County Board of Commissioners finds that the County's agricultural and livestock industries, and the economy that depends on them, are anticipated to suffer widespread and substantial economic damage, potential injuries, and property loss resulting from extreme weather conditions; and

WHEREAS, the extreme weather conditions are anticipated to impact municipal water systems' ability to deliver water for household and business needs; and

WHEREAS, annual water supplies available to municipal water systems, irrigators, and ranchers in Jackson County depend on water stored in the Rogue and Applegate Rivers, and other natural bodies of water, and in reservoirs including, Fish and Fourmile Lakes, as well as estimated seasonal inflow from winter snowpack; and

WHEREAS, a call for water has been issued for Upper Klamath Lake due to water right claim K-622, which requires a lake elevation of 4,143.00 feet at this time of year, while the current elevation is at 4,142.61 feet; and

WHEREAS, this call affects water users with junior water rights, including those on tributaries such as Fourmile Lake, which supplies the Medford Irrigation District and Rogue River Valley Irrigation District; and

WHEREAS, historically, the Districts divert approximately 6,000-acre feet annually from Fourmile Lake, but this season may receive only one-half of that amount; and

WHEREAS, a reduction of this magnitude will increase reliance on live streamflow and stored water from other reservoirs such as Emigrant, Howard Prairie, and Hyatt Lakes; and

WHEREAS, Jackson County contains approximately 40,000 acres of irrigation district lands that rely, in part, on stored water, and many irrigation districts may choose to delay opening day and may be forced to curtail water deliveries later this summer; and

WHEREAS, in addition to irrigation district lands, approximately 170,000 acres of irrigated lands with individual water rights will also be affected by low reservoir and streamflow levels; and

WHEREAS, many municipal water systems, farmers, ranchers, and vineyards depend solely on natural water sources that are not supplemented by reservoir storage, and these natural tributaries to the Rogue and Applegate Rivers are in extreme jeopardy of drying up as they rely on annual snowpack; and

WHEREAS, the Jackson County Board of Commissioners determines that extraordinary measures are required to alleviate hardship for people and livestock, mitigate economic loss, and respond to heightened wildfire risk.

Now, therefore,

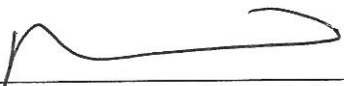
The Board of County Commissioners of Jackson County hereby ORDERS:

1. A local state of emergency is declared in Jackson County for the purpose of assessment, evaluation, and acquiring the ability to provide appropriate available resources due to drought conditions.
2. The Drought Annex of the Jackson County Emergency Operations Plan has been implemented.
3. Pursuant to Oregon Revised Statute (ORS) 401.165, a copy of this signed Order shall be sent to The Honorable Tina Kotek, Governor of Oregon, through the Oregon Department of Emergency Management, requesting that the Governor declare a State Drought Emergency for all of Jackson County under ORS 536.740 due to elevated and continuing drought conditions beginning now and continuing for an undetermined period. The Board further requests that the Governor direct the Oregon Water Resources Department to make available in Jackson County: temporary transfers of water rights, emergency water use permits, use of existing right option agreements, preference for municipal, livestock, human consumption, and any other Federal and State drought assistance and programs as needed.
4. This declaration of a local state of emergency shall take effect immediately from and after its issuance.

DATED this 1st day of April, 2026, at Medford, Oregon.

JACKSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

  
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 Rick Dyer, Chair

  
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 Randy Sparacino, Commissioner

  
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 Colleen Roberts, Commissioner