
Biden-Harris Administration Drought Resilience Interagency Working Group Releases Summary Report, Marks One Year Since Interagency Coordination

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Interagency effort to address drought issues through existing and new programs and resources from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

WASHINGTON, June 1, 2022 – The Biden-Harris Administration today released the Drought Resilience Interagency Working Group’s (IWG) Summary Report outlining the actions taken to date to improve drought-stricken communities’ longer-term resilience to drought through financial and technical assistance. Last month marked one year since the establishment of the Drought Resilience IWG as part of the Biden-Harris Administration’s whole-of-government approach to confronting climate change. Download the [Summary Report](#) (PDF, 337 KB).

“Intense drought and climate change continue to threaten major economic drivers in rural communities, disrupt food systems and water supplies, endanger public health, jeopardize the integrity of critical infrastructure, and exacerbate wildfires and floods,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “Through the IWG, collaboration and coordination among federal agencies has increased in an effort to more effectively deploy resources and support during these intense, drought-stricken times. We have also worked to improve and expand our disaster assistance programs to better help producers recover and build resiliency for those being impacted by drought.”

“The dangerous impacts of climate change and drought are being felt across America. Through the Drought Resilience Interagency Working Group and President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Biden-Harris administration is quickly ushering every resource available to drought-impacted communities to provide relief now, and make investments long into the future,” said Interior Secretary Deb Haaland. “We remain committed to an all-of-government approach and collaboration with Tribes, irrigators, businesses and adjoining communities to address the impacts of the drought crisis and work together on long-term solutions.”

The U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) co-chair the Drought Resilience IWG, which was created under the White House’s National Climate Task Force.

The Drought Resilience IWG agencies are working cooperatively in a whole-of-government manner, to address drought issues through existing programs and resources. There are many historic opportunities provided by the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) to provide critical funding to address water challenges, which includes drought. The Drought Resilience IWG will facilitate interagency coordination to effectively deploy \$13 billion in water-related investments, including \$12.4 billion at DOI ([including investments outlined here](#)) and \$918 million at USDA.

Key actions since the Drought Resilience IWG creation include:

- In fiscal year 2021, the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) and USDA coordinated drought relief efforts in some of the most drought-stricken areas in the West. This included a collective investment of \$38 million (\$23 million from BOR and \$15 million from USDA) in the Klamath Basin to help farmers and Tribes.
- In January 2022, Secretaries Haaland and Vilsack, National Climate Advisor Gina McCarthy and Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Administrator Deanne Criswell met with the Western Governors' Association and signed a Memorandum of Understanding to launch a Task Force as a forum for federal, state, and territorial representatives for the collaborative response to land, water, and wildlife challenges facing western landscapes and people.
- DOI, USDA, and the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) actively participated in listening sessions, drought webinars, and roundtables to disseminate important drought information, discuss the current crisis, and explain the investments in water and drought resilience that will be made possible from the BIL. These efforts will continue throughout 2022.
- FEMA assembled with stakeholders, decision makers, and drought experts to exchange information regarding federal drought response and innovative ideas to build long-term drought resiliency.
- In the Upper Colorado Basin, a federal advisory committee, the Adaptive Management Work Group (AMWG), was formed to bring key issues in the Colorado River Basin to resolution. The AMWG consists of the Hualapai Tribe, the Hopi Tribe, the Navajo Nation, the Pueblo of Zuni, the Southern Paiute Consortium, the San Juan Southern Paiute Tribe, the DOI, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the National Park Service (NPS), USFWS, the seven basin states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming), environmental interests, the recreational industry, federal power purchase contractors, Arizona Game and Fish Department, and the Western Area Power Administration.
- The USDA Climate Hubs continue to focus on drought and are working closely with regional partners including [NOAA's National Integrated Drought Information System](#) and their [Drought Early Warning System](#), the [National Drought Mitigation Center](#), and the [National Weather](#)

Service through the Community Collaborative Rain Snow and Hail Network.

The Drought Resilience IWG is part of the Administration's commitment to provide support for drought-stricken communities. It is focused on addressing the need to improve communities' longer-term resilience to drought given the elongated and severe drought cycles that climate change is causing.

In addition to the Drought Resilience IWG, the Biden-Harris Administration revitalized the collaboration of the National Drought Resilience Partnership (NDRP). The NDRP, formed in 2013, leverages multiple federal agencies, including developing innovative science-driven actions to address water supply challenges.

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