

# STATE OF COLORADO

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## Colorado Water Conservation Board Department of Natural Resources

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TO: Colorado Water Conservation Board Members

FROM: Taryn Hutchins-Cabibi, Drought/Climate Specialist  
Veva Deheza, Section Chief  
Office of Water Conservation & Drought Planning

DATE: August 26, 2009

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item #20, September 15-16, 2009 Board Meeting  
Colorado Drought Response and Mitigation Plan Revision**

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### Staff Recommendation

This is an *informational* item only and Board action is not required.

### Background

In compliance with state and federal regulations; including FEMA requirements for natural hazard mitigation planning; the State of Colorado is revising its existing Drought Mitigation and Response Plan.

The Office of Water Conservation and Drought Planning will oversee this comprehensive plan revision. The effort will require coordination among consultants and stakeholders (e.g. Colorado Division of Emergency Management (CDEM), Colorado Department of Agriculture, DNR & the Governor's Office). Coordination with the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS), National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC) and activities of other Western States (primarily the Upper Colorado River Basin States) is also required.

For the first time the drought plan will address issues related to climate change and climate variability and provide comprehensive technical resources to aid in local drought planning efforts. Monitoring and mitigation efforts will also be examined.

This will be a year-long effort beginning now and concluding in September of 2010. Contractors have been selected for portions of the plan and the procurement process is underway for additional contractors with specific expertise on vulnerability and risk assessment as it pertains to drought.

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## 2010 Drought Mitigation and Response Plan Revision Fact Sheet

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### Background

The Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) - Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) is comprehensively revising the State of Colorado's Drought Mitigation and Response Plan. This plan will be used to meet the drought requirements of the State of Colorado's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan and will comply with all Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) guidelines and criteria for natural hazard mitigation planning and the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP) standards.

### Purpose

The existing Colorado Drought Mitigation and Response Plan has not been comprehensively updated since early 2001. Consequently, lessons learned from recent droughts have not been integrated into the plan. Additionally, advancements in drought monitoring and response need to be incorporated as well as a vulnerability assessment of state owned assets.

In the past the plan has served primarily as a communication response plan, our intent is to develop the plan into a how to guide for dealing with drought from prior to the onset of an event through conclusion of the event. For the first time ever the plan will address climate change and the risks associated with those changes. This will be a stakeholder process with input from a wide array of state and federal agencies and experts.

### The Revised Drought Mitigation & Response Plan will:

- 1) Meet FEMA and EMAP standards & requirements
- 2) Meet drought requirements for the State of Colorado's Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan
- 3) Develop a mechanism to assess impacts of Drought
- 4) Incorporate improvements in drought monitoring since 2001
- 5) Include a vulnerability assessment of state assets; including an examination of the influence of climate change.
- 6) Provide a comprehensive drought planning tool box for local entities including a comprehensive drought planning guidance document and additional web based resources and materials.
- 7) Collaborate with the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) on Upper Colorado River Basin Drought Early Warning System Pilot Project.
- 8) Better integrate local drought planning efforts into the state drought plan.



### HIGHLIGHTS OF DROUGHT PLAN REVISION

- *Revise the existing and outdated 2001 Drought Mitigation & Response Plan.*
- *Provide extensive tools & resources for local drought planning.*
- *Examine & update indices & triggers used for monitoring drought.*
- *Include a comprehensive vulnerability assessment of state assets.*
- *Develop components of a Colorado drought early warning system.*
- *Integrate climate change implications for the first time.*
- *Provide a detailed mitigation & response plan for times of drought.*

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