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DROUGHT AND INFRASTRUCTURE: A PLANNING GUIDE

BACKGROUND

Unlike other natural threats, drought is slow moving, hard to predict, and hard to define, yet resulting impact can be region-wide on a scale equivalent to a hurricane or other major disaster. For long-term drought conditions especially, water resources will become scarce and likely threaten multiple water-dependent sectors in their ability to produce goods or services. Federal agency members of the [National Drought Resilience Partnership](#) (NDRP) developed *The Drought and Infrastructure: A Planning Guide* (Drought Guide) to introduce the nature of drought, how it can affect infrastructure operations, federal agency sources of information, and drought mitigation planning tools. The Drought Guide is intended to be used by CISA Regional staff, local, tribal, territorial, and regional governments, communities, infrastructure providers, and other stakeholders to anticipate and reduce the potential consequences of droughts on critical water, transportation, dams, power, and other services as recently illustrated by reduced water levels in western lakes on which multiple sectors depend. This guide is relevant in view of President Biden’s Executive Order on Tackling the Climate Crisis. This order reaffirms the U.S. decision to rejoin the Paris Agreement and develop strategies for integrating climate considerations, including drought. Similarly, the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), held in Glasgow, Scotland, brought parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and enhanced commitments towards mitigating climate change. Higher air temperatures worsen drought conditions and intensify them. The Drought Guide can support the goal to develop strategies for integrating climate considerations by anticipating and preparing for the consequences of drought on infrastructure services and offers resources and decision-making tools. Lastly, Congress passed the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal, also known as Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, that includes an investment in our nation’s infrastructure and competitiveness. The legislation will build infrastructure resilience against the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, including an investment of over \$50 billion to protect against droughts, heat, floods, and wildfires.

The Drought Guide can contribute by providing drought-related resources that address the impacts of drought on infrastructure that are essential to the livelihood and resilience of communities across the nation. The Drought Guide is a supplemental resource to CISA’s recently published [Infrastructure Resilience Planning Framework \(IRPF\)](#).

The Drought Guide provides a succinct introduction and links to tools and resources offered by other agencies. It includes:

- An overview of drought and federal information sources on risk;
- Examples and an illustrative graphic of direct and indirect impacts that drought can have on infrastructure systems;
- A table of federal tools and resources to assess vulnerability or mitigate risk of drought organized by steps in a standard mitigation planning process; according to the IRPF process;
- A list of additional federal and other information sources to further analyze the impact drought can have on critical infrastructure services and operating systems.

TOPLINE MESSAGING

- Unlike cyber attacks and hurricanes, drought impacts can be gradual and less noticed, leaving communities unprepared. 2021 has shown secondary consequences such as threats to hydroelectrical production and distribution from lowered lake levels to wildfire destruction.
- The *Drought and Infrastructure: A Planning Guide* (Drought Guide) was developed with the [National Drought Resilience Partnership](#) for localities, infrastructure owners, and operators as a quick reference to the nature of drought, how it can affect infrastructure operations, and federal information sources and resources to mitigate risk to infrastructure services. Planning tools were compiled with the US Department of Agriculture, FEMA, Environmental Protection Agency and National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Association.
- The Drought Guide is intended to be used by CISA Regional staff, local, tribal, territorial, and regional governments, communities, infrastructure providers, and other stakeholders to anticipate and reduce the potential consequences of droughts on critical water, transportation, dams, power, and other services.
- The Drought Guide includes four sections: 1) an overview of drought and federal information sources on risk; 2) examples and an illustrative graphic of direct and indirect impacts that drought can have on infrastructure systems; 3) a table of federal tools and resources to assess vulnerability or mitigate risk of drought, which are organized according to the IRPF process; and 4) a list of additional information sources that can be requested from CISA and other agencies.
- Drought impacts all facets of our society, from food production to water quality to public health. Communities depend on water for economic and physical survival.
- The Drought Guide includes a table of mitigation tools and resources from other agency members of the National Drought Resilience Partnership organized by the steps outlined in CISA's newly released Infrastructure Resilience Planning Framework (IRPF) and typical planning processes.
- The guide is intended to be used as a resource for CISA Regions and PSAs who receive stakeholder requests related to drought; however, state and local planners, emergency managers, and infrastructure owners and operators may also benefit from the guide.
- The Drought Guide is available to the public online through the CISA website at cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/Drought_and_Infrastructure_A_Planning_Guide_508c.pdf.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

For more information about Drought and Infrastructure: A Planning Guide please visit [here](#) on CISA.gov. For more information or for additional help, contact CISA-ExternalAffairs@hq.dhs.gov. For media inquiries, please contact CISA Media at CISAMedia@cisa.dhs.gov.