



Beth Callaway
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September 4, 2024

United States Senate
The Honorable Maria Cantwell
The Honorable Ted Cruz
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2023 (HR6093) and provisions for NOAA's National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)

Dear Chair Cantwell and Ranking Member Cruz:

The Interstate Council on Water Policy (ICWP) writes to express our support for the timely consideration by the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of Weather Act Reauthorization Act of 2023 (HR 6093). ICWP's membership includes state and interstate water resources management agencies, each who work closely with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) to coordinate drought monitoring, forecasting, risk assessment, response planning, and information sharing at national, state, and local levels. We ask for your timely consideration of this bill by your committee as soon as possible.


As passed by the House of Representatives, HR 6093 addresses important drought preparedness and mitigation priorities for NIDIS that our membership firmly supports. These provisions include the advancement of flash drought research and indicator tools as a core NIDIS function and to include ecological drought as part of ongoing research and monitoring activities for NIDIS.

We urge the Committee to add one more provision to this bill to meet the goals for a robust NIDIS-supported network: the authorization of dedicated funding to finish NIDIS Drought Early Warning System (DEWS) rollout in areas of the country that are impacted by drought and not currently covered by DEWS. At a minimum, the cost to complete this rollout would be an additional one-time \$3.5 million. Rollout would incorporate Michigan and the Lower Mississippi and Mid-Atlantic regions, which represents an area of approximately 20 percent of the continental United States and home to roughly 52 million

people, plus Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico and the Pacific Islands.¹ Authorization for an additional \$3.5 million of funding would complete the rollout of DEWS where it is needed most and underscore Congressional commitment to drought preparedness priorities that support state, local and regional efforts.

Thank you again for your work to grow the capabilities for NIDIS into a mature program through this legislation. If you have any questions regarding these comments as the Weather Act reauthorization is developed, please contact me at: Beth@icwp.org or 307-772-1999. ICWP appreciates the opportunity to provide this input.

Regards,



Beth Callaway
ICWP Executive Director

CC:

Veva DeHeza, Executive Director, National Integrated Drought Information System
Tony Willardson, Executive Director, Western States Water Council

¹ See Section 502 Subsection 4 of the current draft of the bill; for further details on why this is important, see [our letter to the House Subcommittee on Environment](#) dated July 27, 2023.