EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 15-09

DIRECTING STATE AGENCIES TO PLAN FOR RESILIENCY TO DROUGHT, TO MEET THE CHALLENGE THAT A CHANGING CLIMATE BRINGS

Water is the foundation for our economies, communities, ecosystems, and quality of life. Oregon has a strong history of managing and caring for water to meet both instream and out-of-stream needs.

As of July 27 2015, I have declared drought emergencies in 23 of Oregon's 36 counties. These emergencies have been occasioned by drought conditions that include record-breaking low snowpack levels, high temperatures, and significantly low stream flows in many parts of the state. Many Oregon counties have experienced two consecutive years of drought conditions, and several have had multiple drought declarations over the past five years. The primary problem experienced in the 2014-2015 water year so far – an extremely warm winter resulting in historic lows for mountain snowpack, the main source of water storage and stream flows for many areas of Oregon – may occur again in the winter of 2015-2016 due to El Nino conditions. In the longer-term, if climate predictions are correct, these conditions will become the new normal. Oregon, along with other western states, must plan for and address how a changing climate challenges our current systems and policies, and threatens our economy and quality of life.

Drought has many effects, including severe water reductions for irrigated agriculture; reduced forage for grazing; water restrictions or shortages in communities with limited supplies; low reservoir levels that limit or prevent recreational activities; low stream flows and high water temperatures that harm fish and restrict angling and other river uses; reduced productivity of forests and increased mortality of trees; and increased risk of wildfire.

Drought conditions may persist or grow worse in future years. Now is the time to get ahead of our water resource challenges and improve our resiliency to drought to prevent much more serious problems.

The Oregon Legislature has approved new funding to begin helping communities do the work to address their water challenges. While this funding is a critical piece of meeting instream and out-of-stream water needs for Oregon's future, it is also critical that the state update its drought emergency plans and processes, and update how the state manages its own use of limited water resources.

Many Oregon agencies already have taken steps to improve the sustainability of their operations, including actions to reduce water, but Oregon state government

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can and should lead by example, demonstrating to Oregonians that drought is a serious issue that can be managed if we all work together.

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY DIRECTED AND ORDERED:

To increase Oregon's resiliency to drought and to better protect Oregon's communities, economy and natural resources:

I. I hereby direct state agencies that own or manage land or facilities, including the Department of Administrative Services, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department, Oregon Department of State Lands, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, Oregon Department of Forestry, Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Military Department, and the Department of Corrections, but not including the Oregon University System, to:

a. Work with the Department of Administrative Services and Oregon Water Resources Department to establish what their baseline use of water is;

b. Consult with water suppliers, or (as applicable) manage their own water supplies, to identify and carry out:

(1) Short-term actions that curtail or end the non-essential use of water for landscaping and other exterior features of building and grounds including, but not limited to lawn watering, fountains that do not re-circulate water, and window washing;

(2) A moratorium (where allowed) on the installation of new non-essential landscaping projects that require irrigation at state-owned buildings;

(3) Development and placement of signs and other messaging within state-owned buildings to encourage state

employees to reduce their non-essential uses of water inside state-owned buildings; and

(4) Assessments to determine that state-owned buildings and facilities have current leak detection systems or procedures to address leaks that are being carried out on a timely basis.

c. Consider any social and disproportionate effects of actions on underserved communities before making final decisions on water-saving measures; and

d. Report to the Governor by November 1, 2015, and annually thereafter, on progress in implementing these actions, barriers encountered, and future steps planned to reduce non-essential use of water.

The goal of such actions is to reduce non-essential water consumption by 15 percent or more on average across all state-owned facilities on or before December 31, 2020, and to work with private building owners who lease facilities to state agencies to reduce non-essential water consumption at their buildings.

II. I hereby direct the Oregon Water Resources Department and Oregon Office of Emergency Management to engage other state agencies, federal agencies, tribal governments, local governments and other stakeholders to update Oregon's Drought Annex to the State of Oregon Emergency Operations Plan to reflect emerging information on the risk of drought and the need to assure that Oregon is appropriately prepared for future droughts.

III. I hereby direct the Oregon Water Resources Department to address drought in Oregon's 2017 update to the Integrated Water Resources Strategy, including long-term drought resiliency planning.

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IV. I hereby direct all state agencies to work with the Oregon Water Resources Department to use their websites and other outreach tools to:

a. Encourage voluntary actions by Oregonians to conserve water; and

b. Communicate agencies' actions to conserve water.

This Executive Order shall remain in effect until it is otherwise modified, amended or terminated.

Done at Salem, Oregon this 27 day of July 2015.

Kate Brown

KATE BROWN
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:

Jeanne P. Atkins

Jeanne P. Atkins
SECRETARY OF STATE

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