

Oregon's Drought Readiness Council

May 17, 2016 Meeting Notes



Attendees:

Lauri Aunan, Governor's Office	Rick Kepler, ODFW	Ken Stahr, WRD
Brenda Bateman, WRD (Co-Chair)	Matt Marheine, OEM (Co-Chair)	Nick Yonker, ODF
Tom Elliott, DOE	Alyssa Mucken, WRD	Emily York, OHA
Bruce Gilles, DEQ	Wade Peerman, DEQ	
Bev Hall, OEM	Erik Rau, OEM	

Welcome and Introductions:

Brenda Bateman & Matt Marheine, council co-chairs welcomed everyone and participants introduced themselves.

Reviewing the Committee's Objective:

"To assess how water conditions may affect various sectors across the State of Oregon; to review local requests for assistance, and to make recommendations to the Governor regarding the need for state drought declarations."

Brenda asked committee members to review the Council's objective and offer any suggested changes. Feedback included:

- Add a phrase at the end noting "or emergency declarations, based on drought."
- Add another responsibility, "ensuring coordination among state agencies, with helping water users and others access drought-related information and assistance programs."

Resulting Text:

"To assess how water conditions may affect various sectors across the State of Oregon; to review local requests for assistance; to make recommendations to the Governor regarding the need for state drought declarations or emergency declarations, based on drought; and to ensure coordination among state agencies, as they help water users and others access drought-related information and assistance programs."

Overview

Lauri Aunan, from the Office of Governor Brown provided an overview and context for the meeting.

- 2015 was by several measures, amongst the driest and hottest we've seen in Oregon.
- These conditions sparked a number of institutional responses, which provide some of the context for today's discussions.
- In 2015, Governor Brown drought declarations for most of Oregon's counties, and also signed EO 15-09, directing agencies to reduce non-essential water use by at least 15 percent by the end of 2020. (Progress toward this goal has been documented in a [November 2015 Report](#), on-line)
- She directed WRD, OEM and state agency partners to update the state's drought annex.
- And, she directed WRD and partners to build drought resiliency into its 2017 update of the Integrated Water Resources Strategy; these development efforts are underway now.
- In 2016, the Oregon Legislature also directed WRD to convene a Drought Task Force, with members nominated by the Governor and Legislature.
- This Task Force will look at the state's toolbox of "short-term drought response tools" and make recommendations to improve or add to this toolbox. The report is due to the Legislature in November 2016.
- WRD will staff this task force, which will begin its work this summer.

- Water conditions of 2015 are the “new normal,” and we need to make sure our institutional structures and capacity are well-positioned to anticipate, respond, and assist, in times of drought.
- Your work here at the Drought Readiness Council is critical, helping to ensure that the state is weighing the right information as it considers drought declaration requests from the counties, and makes recommendations to the Governor.

2016 Drought Annex

Matt Marheine of OEM and Alyssa Mucken, WRD’s Drought Coordinator unveiled the state’s [2016 Drought Annex](#) and provided initial comments. This is a sound document resulting from inter-agency coordination and information sharing. Next steps include implementation and the need to reach out to water users and local governments, so that they know the content of the document and the process used to develop it. This is a slimmed down version, compared to previous editions. Its focus is on roles and responsibilities of state agencies during a drought.

Highlights of the 2015 document include:

- Definition of drought
- Description and membership of the Water Supply Availability Committee and Drought Readiness Council.
- Short summary of general indicators to measure and identify drought.
- Clarifying authorities for declaring standard drought (WRD’s Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) 536) vs. emergency (OEM’s ORS 401)
- Description of tools that are only available during drought declaration.

Discussion:

- This is a streamlined, easy-to-read annex.
- Thanks to WRD and OEM for all their work on this.
- We have the ability to update this at any point. As we find items that need additional clarification, we can update as necessary. Please pay attention to problem areas, track them, and get your thoughts to Erik and Alyssa. We do a review each year, and work with the Governor's Office to re-promulgate every four years.
- If agencies develop new policies around this issue; please let partner agencies know. You can use this forum.
- Connect with WRD to make sure you're not building anything institutionally that is in conflict with broader efforts.

Update on Water Conditions

Ken Stahr, Chair, Water Supply Availability Committee, transmitted a memo from the WSAC to the Drought Readiness Council, describing the significant and rapid changes in water conditions (e.g., snowpack, temperature, streamflow forecasts, reservoir levels, fire conditions, etc.). See attached. He also described the process WSAC is using to develop decision-support tools.

Reporting. WSAC will plan to publish condition reports monthly; WRD can fill in with brief water condition reports in the weeks between. Send a note to Kenneth.L.stahr@state.or.us if you would like to be added to the Department's water conditions list-serve.

Decision-Support Tool. WSAC is working on a phased plan to identify climate indicators that will help us understand water conditions in Oregon and identify emerging issues. Once the tool is available, the WSAC will incorporate the information into the monthly reports.

Discussion:

- Like the format. Easy to read and use in presentations. Consider adding sample hydrographs to upcoming water condition reports.
- Even under good water conditions, we're committed to publishing these regularly. We want to keep communications open with our partners and stakeholders. Expect to see these reports on a regular basis...drought or no drought.

- Is WSAC's memo from yesterday available to the public? It's good and should be widely shared. Yes, it will be made available as part of these meeting materials. The content will also be made available as part of the Water Conditions Report.

Products of the Council

- Question 1: When counties come to the Council requesting drought declarations, can we provide them with a consistent and easy-to-use template?
 - Don't just call out WRD in paragraph three; extend to all agencies.
 - Yes, but only if they operate within their authorities.
 - Confirm that the county itself has declared drought
 - County should note any actions already taken; note remaining gaps.
 - Broaden "river" to "natural resources".
 - Make this template one of several resources available to local governments (also sample executive orders, drought annex, one-pagers with list of available tools, etc.)
- Question 2: As the WSAC develops decision-support tools for Oregon Communities, what suggestions or questions does this Council have for them?
 - We want to make sure our communications help folks identify drought conditions and need for drought declaration.
- Question 3: Are there other work products the Council should be considering or developing (e.g., new template for drought executive orders, etc.)?
 - Agency Actions. Where can we memorialize the actions we've taken (e.g., fishing closures by ODFW, OPRD fire ban, etc.)? Probably on each agencies' website, with links *from* the Governor's website and *to* WRD's website. Also, capture these in notes from the Drought Readiness Council, and as examples in the state's guidance/resource documents.
 - Public Information. How do we inform people of these actions in real time? We'll need a more formal communication plan at the Drought Readiness Council. Get notes from agencies' public information officers, who had some discussions around this during 2015.
 - General communication messages. These would include generic talking points about the effect drought has on recreation, agriculture, etc. It could also include fact sheets or brochures that agencies has developed (e.g, how to use water wisely). As noted above, develop one-pager with description of available drought tools. Again, check in with PIOs.
 - Impacts of Drought. How can we gather and share information about what is going on locally? Capture anecdotal content from county declaration letters; ask them specifically what drought impacts they've observed or what they're worried about. Make sure those communities requesting drought declarations have the opportunity to visit with the Drought Readiness Council and tell their stories.
 - Executive Order Template for the Governor to Use When Declaring Drought. OEM will develop a first draft, removing ORS 401 language and replacing with ORS 536. The county should first (1) declare an emergency at the county level, and then follow that with (2) a letter to the Governor requesting a standard, county-wide drought declaration under ORS 536. This unlocks a number of water-related tools at WRD; these tools are not available outside of a drought. Should conditions worsen to the point where the situation is life-threatening or no longer manageable at the local level, and water needs to be hauled or other tangible assistance is needed from OEM's network, the county may send (3) a follow-up letter to the Governor requesting an emergency declaration. OEM can provide assistance to guide counties through this process.

Recap:

- 1) county declares emergency once.
- 2) county sends request to state under ORS 536 to unlock drought tools.
- 3) county sends request to state under ORS 401 to deliver water.

- Federal Assistance Programs. Create a library of websites, key federal contacts, etc.

- Develop key contact list: WSAC and DRC members, state, federal, tribal partners. Funding partners, etc.
- Solicit Feed-back: encourage the communities to use the tools we pull together and note any tools that are or are not helpful in their request letters.

Announcements and Next Meeting

- Expect to see a doodle poll out that checks availability for Thursday, June 16 and 23. Generally, let's try to schedule during the second week of June. WSAC will attempt to hold their meetings on Tuesdays; let's try to follow them on Thursdays.
- May 31st is Rick Kepler's retirement. Thank you for your service!
- Taking his place at ODFW will be Anna Pakenham Stevenson. Welcome, Anna.

The meeting adjourned at noon.

Oregon County Letterhead – Customize highlighted areas with county-specific information

Dr. Brenda Bateman, Division Administrator
Oregon Water Resources Department
Co-Chair, Oregon Drought Readiness Council
725 Summer Street NE, Suite A
Salem, OR 97301
Via Email: brenda.o.bateman@state.or.us

Mr. Matt Marheine, Section Manager
Oregon Office of Emergency Management
Co-Chair, Oregon Drought Readiness Council
PO Box 14370
Salem, OR 97309
Via Email: matt.marhein@state.or.us

RE: Oregon County Drought

Date:

Dr. Bateman and Mr. Marheine:

Oregon County, by and through its County Elected Officials, requests that the Governor of Oregon issue an executive order for all of Oregon County under the provisions of ORS 536 as a direct result of severe and continuing drought conditions.

There is the potential for the Oregon County agricultural and livestock, natural resources, recreational, tourism, and related economies to experience widespread and severe damage resulting from extreme weather conditions within the county. Add narrative about specific observed or imminent impacts here.

The county has already formally declared a drought, as per the attached document, and has taken the following actions to anticipate or mitigate effects of the drought: fill in public and private sector actions.

The Oregon County Board of Commissioners/Judge has determined that additional action by and support from the state is needed. This may include assistance from the Oregon Water Resources Department and other Oregon executive branch agencies, operating within their statutory authorities.

Oregon County Board of Commissioners/Judge therefore requests an executive order from the Governor, declaring drought in Oregon County.

We extend in advance our appreciation for your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,

Signature Block

Executive Order No. 16-XX

DETERMINATION OF A STATE OF DROUGHT EMERGENCY IN OREGON COUNTY DUE TO DROUGHT, LOW SNOW PACK LEVELS, AND LOW WATER CONDITIONS

At the request of Oregon County (by Resolution XXXXXXXX dated Month Date, 2016), and based on the recommendations of the Drought Readiness Council and the Water Supply Availability Committee, and pursuant to ORS 536.740, I find the continuing dry conditions, low snowpack, and lack of precipitation have caused a severe, continuing drought in Oregon County.

Projected forecasts are not expected to alleviate the drought conditions, or the resulting economic impacts to agricultural, livestock, and natural resources.

The dry conditions present hardships for these communities: crops and agricultural and recreational investments are at risk; animals and plants that rely on Oregon's surface water supplies are threatened; and the risk of wildfires across the state is greatly increased. Current conditions are being monitored and analyzed by state agencies including the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Water Resources, and the Oregon Office of Emergency Management.

I am therefore declaring that a severe, continuing drought exists in Oregon County, and directing the following actions.

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED AND DIRECTED:

- I. The Oregon Department of Agriculture is directed to coordinate and provide assistance in seeking federal resources to mitigate drought conditions and assist in agricultural recovery in Oregon County.
- II. The Department of Water Resources and the Water Resources Commission are directed to coordinate and provide assistance to water users in Oregon County as they determine is necessary and appropriate in accordance with ORS 536.700 to 536.780.
- III. The Office of Emergency Management is directed to coordinate and assist as needed to address current and projected conditions in Oregon County.
- IV. All other state agencies are directed to coordinate with the above agencies and to provide appropriate state resources as determined necessary to assist affected political subdivisions and water users in Oregon County.
- V. This Executive Order expires on December 31, 2016.

Done at Salem, Oregon, this ____ day of Month, 2016.

KATE BROWN
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:

Jeanne Atkins

SECRETARY OF STATE



United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JUN 2 2016

The Honorable C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor
State of Idaho
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Governor Otter:

In accordance with 7 CFR 759.5(a), I am designating four Idaho counties as primary natural disaster areas due to a recent drought. The primary counties included under this designation are:

Canyon Owyhee Payette Washington

According to the U.S. Drought Monitor (see <http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>), these counties suffered from a drought intensity value during the growing season of: (1) D2 (Drought-Severe) for 8 or more consecutive weeks; or (2) D3 (Drought-Extreme) or D4 (Drought-Exceptional).

In accordance with section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, five counties are named as contiguous disaster counties. The contiguous counties included under this designation are:

Ada Adams Elmore Gem Twin Falls

Also, in accordance with section 321(a) of the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, counties in adjacent States are named as contiguous disaster areas. Those States, counties, and numbers are:

Contiguous Counties in Adjacent States:

Nevada (2)
Elko Humboldt

Oregon (2)
Baker Malheur

The Honorable C.L. "Butch" Otter

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A Secretarial disaster designation makes farm operators in primary counties and those counties contiguous to such primary counties eligible to be considered for certain assistance from the Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. This assistance includes FSA emergency loans. Farmers in eligible counties have 8 months from the date of a Secretarial disaster declaration to apply for emergency loans. FSA considers each emergency loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of production losses on the farm, and the security and repayment ability of the operator.

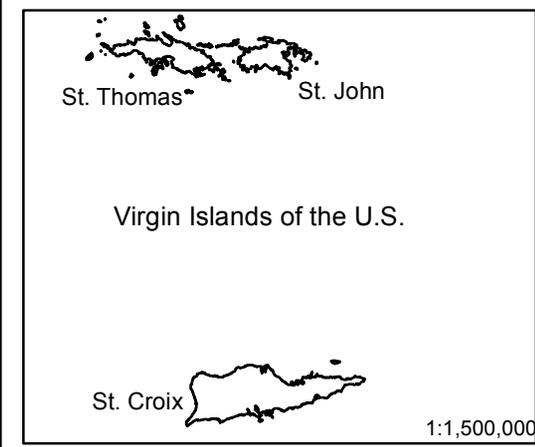
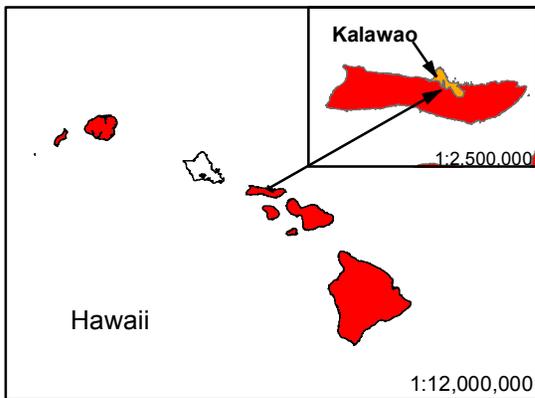
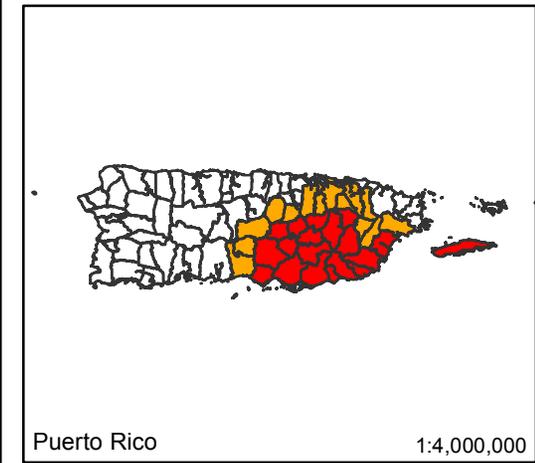
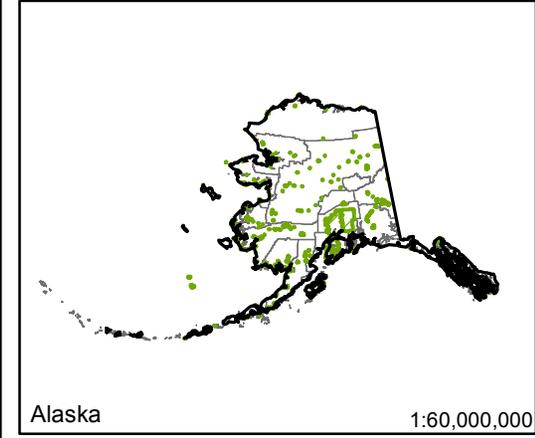
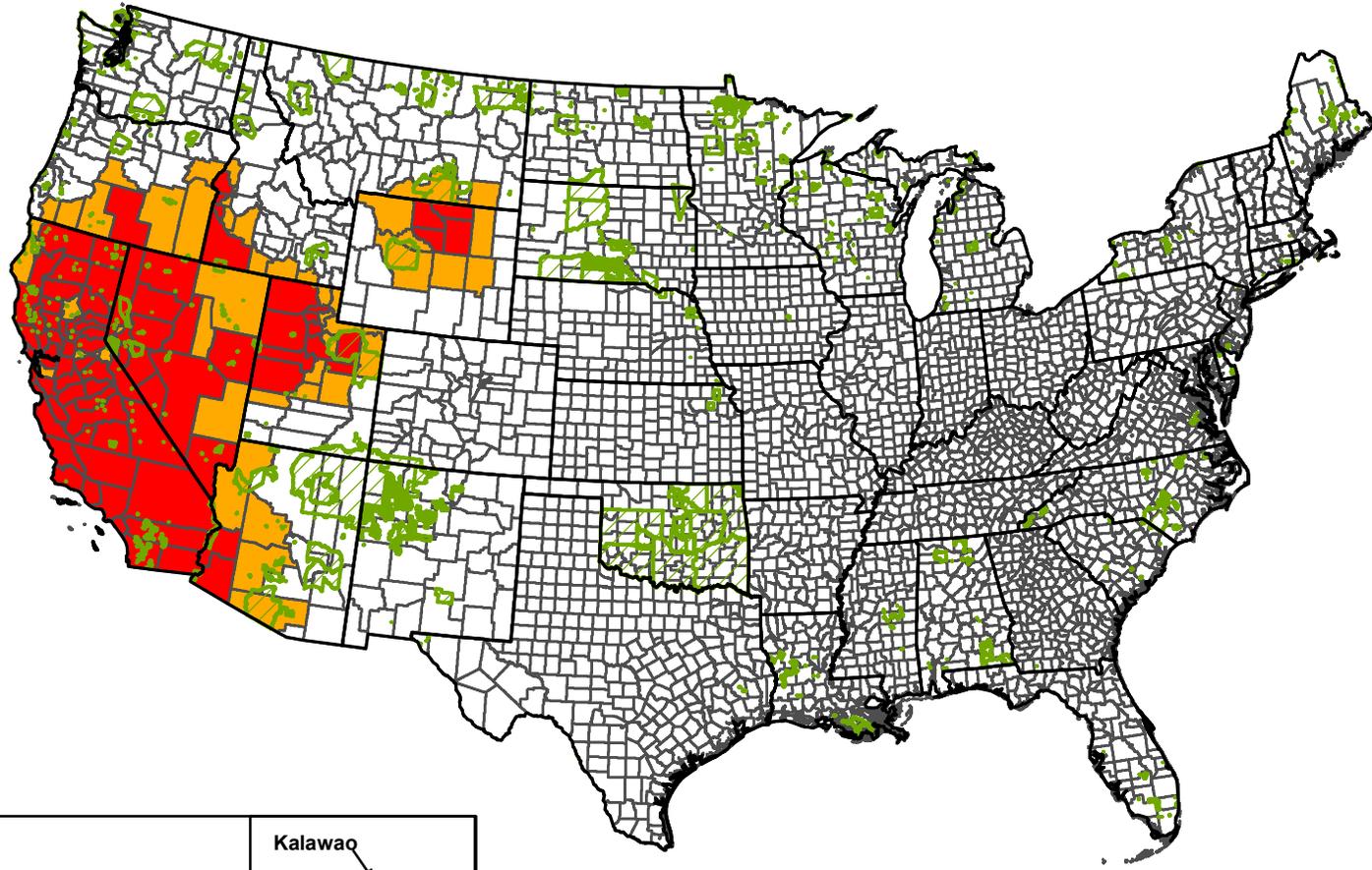
Local FSA offices can provide affected farmers with further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Thomas J. Vilsack". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Thomas" and last name "Vilsack" clearly legible.

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

2016 Secretarial Drought Designations - All Drought



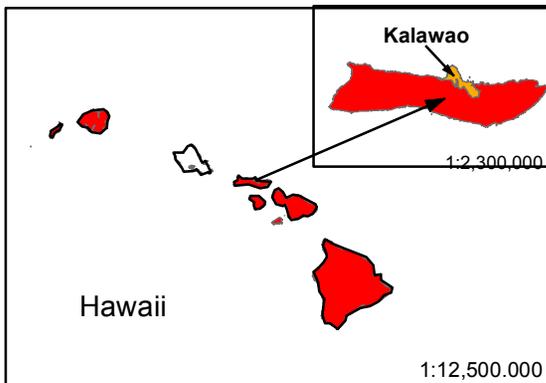
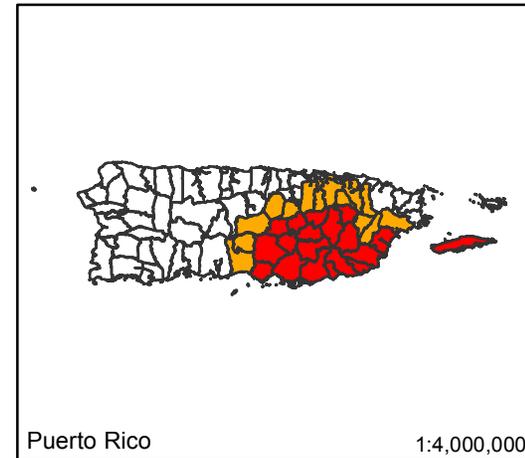
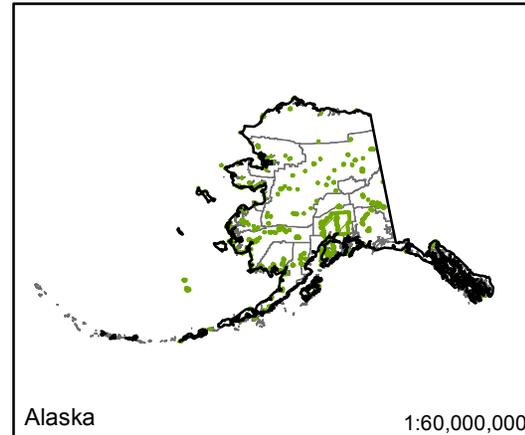
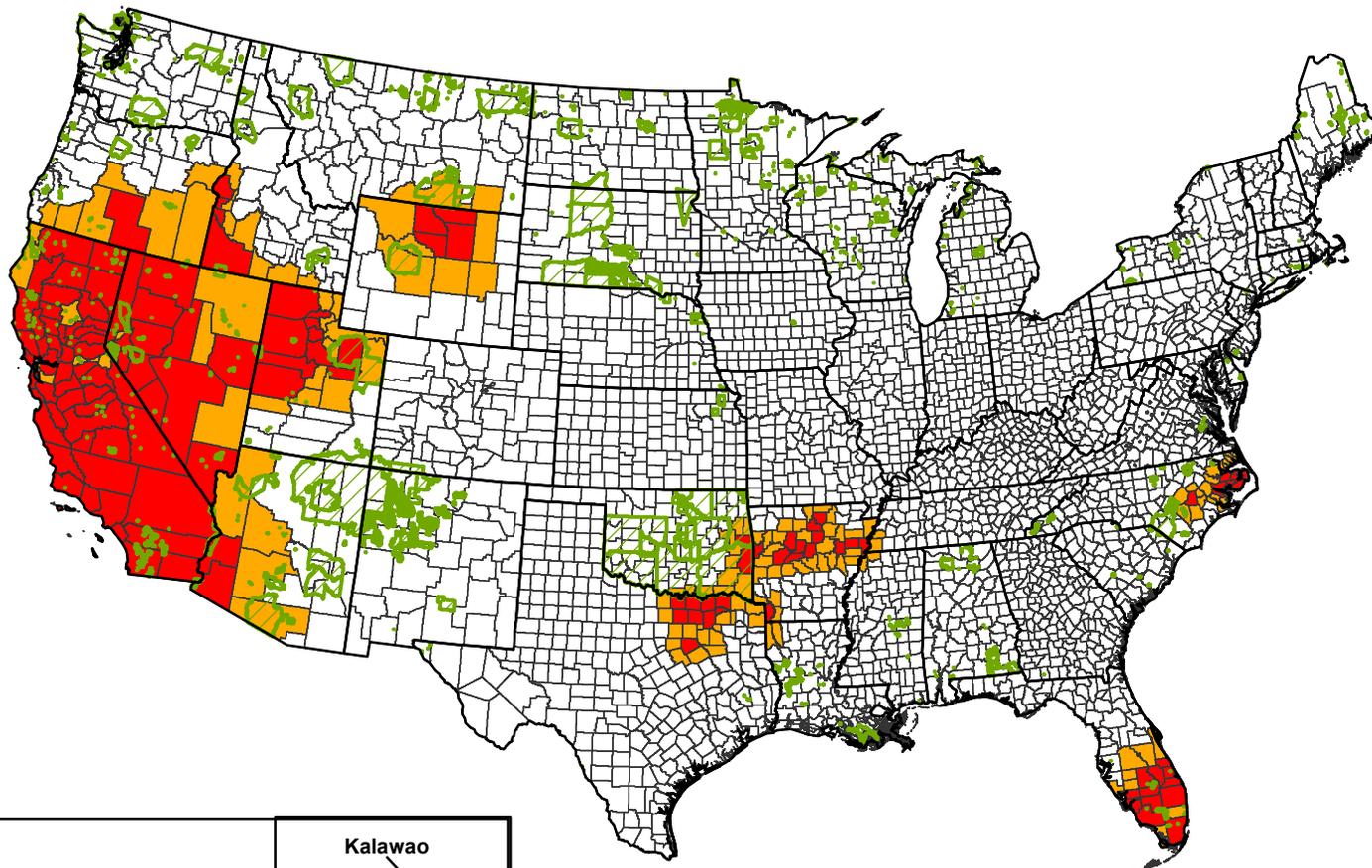
Secretarial Drought Designations for 2016
Disaster Incidents as of June 1, 2016

-  State Boundary
-  County Boundary
-  Tribal Lands
-  Primary Counties: 107
-  Contiguous Counties: 64

1:25,000,000

Secretarial Disaster Designations - CY 2016

Primary and Contiguous Counties Designated for 2016 Crop Disaster Losses



All Secretarial Designations as of June 1, 2016
Total All Crop Approved Designations

-  State Boundary
-  County Boundary
-  Tribal Lands
-  Primary Counties: 149
-  Contiguous Counties: 151

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