



EXECUTIVE ORDER 2021-08

WHEREAS, the current United States Drought Monitor places the entire State of North Dakota in drought conditions with at least 94 percent of the state in the Severe Drought (D2) category and 70 percent in the Extreme Drought (D3) category; and,

WHEREAS, North Dakota is currently experiencing the worst drought on record since 2000 with the Drought Severity and Coverage Index rising to a historic high of 365; and,

WHEREAS, the Extreme Drought coverage area now surpasses the 2017 record, and a severe deficit of moisture during September 2020 through February 2021 exceeds the driest six-month period on record since 1895; and,

WHEREAS, the State Climatologist anticipates the drought coverage area will expand and intensify throughout the growing season and reach the Exceptional Drought (D4) category; and,

WHEREAS, drought conditions have the potential to adversely impact our agricultural industry, the mainstay of our economy; farmers and ranchers face continued lack of moisture and long, hot days that may result in poor crop and forage production and jeopardize water sources for livestock; and,

WHEREAS, dry conditions and deficit snow cover threaten cropland and rangeland, contributing to a 2021 fire season recently characterized by the State Forester as unprecedented; large fires as early as January have continued into spring with the total acreage burned to date now more than triple the reported acreage burned in 2020; and

WHEREAS, the National Weather Service has been issued multiple Red Flag and Critical Fire Weather warnings due to gusty winds, low humidity levels and record high temperatures as rapidly evolving, large-scale fires occur throughout the state, prompting evacuations of farmsteads and residents in the city of Tokio on the Spirit Lake Nation; and,

WHEREAS, firefighters across the state are requesting mutual aid to battle large fires threatening the safety of North Dakotans, their communities and farmsteads; on April 1, 2021, a western North Dakota fire resulted in the evacuation of the city of Medora, where rapidly spreading flames came perilously close to destroying homes, historic properties and livestock, and burned 2,276 acres; and,

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the State of North Dakota to assist its citizens in addressing emergencies, disasters and other hardships.

NOW THEREFORE, Doug Burgum, as Governor of North Dakota, by virtue of the authority vested under Article V, Section 1, North Dakota Constitution and Chapter 37-17.1, North Dakota Century Code, hereby declares a statewide drought disaster and orders activation of the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) in order to assist local and tribal officials, to prevent injuries and save lives, alleviate hardships, implement appropriate response and recovery actions and future mitigation measures, and facilitate restoration of services and infrastructure.

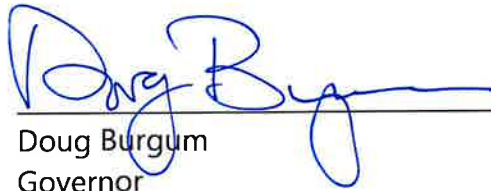
All state agencies, to include the N.D. Department of Emergency Services, N.D. State Water Commission, N.D. Forest Service and N.D. National Guard, are ordered to maintain high readiness levels of drought-related resources and capabilities in preparation for timely execution of their respective responsibilities pursuant to the SEOP. The Adjutant General is authorized to activate and make available N.D. National Guard resources to support state agencies and local and tribal governments based upon normal cost shares.

This order is issued pursuant to the following authority and for the following reasons:

1. The Governor is vested with the executive authority pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the North Dakota Constitution; and,
2. The Governor is vested with statutory authority to issue executive orders to minimize or avert the effects of a disaster or emergency pursuant to Chapter 37-17.1 of the North Dakota Century Code; and,
3. A coordinated and effective effort of all State departments is required to minimize the impact of disasters and emergencies in this state.

This order is in effect immediately and shall remain in effect until it is rescinded.

Executed at the State Capitol in Bismarck, North Dakota, this 8th day of April 2021.



Doug Burgum
Governor

Attest:



Alvin A. Jaeger
Secretary of State