



Washington Office
1275 K St., NW, Suite 750
Washington, DC 20005
202-408-9541/Fax 202-408-9542

Advocacy Position Statement

National Drought Policy

Statement of Purpose

The American Public Works Association (APWA) recognizes that droughts of varying severity occur repeatedly in all climatic regimes and seeks to inform elected officials, regulators, policy-makers and decision-makers and the public at-large of its stated position on drought and drought conditions. There has been little coordinated federal responsibility to manage drought preparedness and response and APWA feels a comprehensive and coordinated drought strategy is needed. .

Statement of Position

To assist the nation in resolving the drought issue the American Public Works Association:

Requests the creation of a Drought Assistance Fund within the federal government, which would be used to assist state, local, tribal, and critical service entities with drought-related activities and would expand the technology transfer of drought and water conservation strategies and; encourages the development of regional drought preparedness and response plans (DPRPs) by water providers in cooperation with local, state and federal agencies and required to mitigate the negative economic, social and environmental impacts caused by a lack of available water and; supports planning and management efforts that would include steps that will reduce the vulnerability of future droughts and; requires better planning, data and analytical techniques and a more coordinated, cooperative and communicative water management strategy. The plan should incorporate land use planning, proactive mitigation, resource stewardship, environmental conservation and public education as the basis of the initiative.

The effect of inaction will prove to be detrimental to our environment, economy and long term quality of life.

Background and Rationale

It has long been accepted by the American people that water is a precious resource, necessary for the development and support of communities, production of food and livestock, and major contributor to the quality of life for citizens. Threatened loss of the availability of water through drought conditions is a major concern to officials

responsible for providing adequate water supplies. Drought causes widespread and negative economic, social and environmental impacts.

We support the creation of an office that spans across jurisdictional boundaries for watersheds, that has the statutory authority to: develop a coordinated national drought action plan based on a watershed approach; evaluate federal drought-related programs; coordinate and prioritize enhancement of the national drought monitoring network; and provide for the development of a drought information delivery system, drought planning models, and drought preparedness plans at the state level.

The work of the office would be to develop a comprehensive National Drought Policy Action plan, which delineates and integrates responsibilities for activities relating to droughts, ensuring that those activities are coordinated with the activities of the States, and local governments. Water planning needs to include both sustainability and land use planning.

Planning and management efforts should include initiatives that will reduce vulnerability from future droughts. Where possible, such plans should include public information and education campaigns, ongoing water conservation programs, water use restrictions, water transfers from region to region, water transfers from agriculture to municipal and industrial uses, conjunctive use and local sharing of supplies and facilities. Communities must learn to effectively capture excess water/rainfall before it evaporates or runs off.

APWA supports research for new technologies, such as aquifer recharge, efficient irrigation techniques in order to capture and store water for future usage. Federal and state governments should provide encouragement and support, both technical and financial, to local water providers for the development of drought preparedness and response plans.

Providing appropriate planning for the provision of adequate water and preparedness for drought are major issues for our country and ones which the American Public Works Association strongly supports.

Sponsor

Water Resources Management Committee