

National Integrated Drought Information System: Priorities for 2016-2020

NIDIS Executive Council Meeting



October 27, 2016
Washington, D.C.



NIDIS is congressionally authorized and mandated (Public Laws 109-430 and 113-86) to:

1. Provide an effective drought early warning system that:

- (A) collects and integrates information on the key indicators of drought in order to make usable, reliable, and timely drought forecasts and assessments of drought, including assessments of the severity of drought conditions and impacts; and
- (B) communicates drought forecasts, drought conditions, and drought impacts on an ongoing basis to decision makers at all levels of government, the private sector, and the public in order to engender better informed and more timely decisions, thereby leading to reduced impacts and costs;

NIDIS Public Laws

(C) includes timely (where possible real-time) data, information, and products that reflect local, regional, and State differences in drought conditions

2. Coordinate, and integrate as practicable, Federal research in support of a drought early warning system; and

3. Build upon existing forecasting and assessment programs and partnerships

(2014 Reauthorization)

4. Continue ongoing research and monitoring activities related to drought, including research activities relating to length, severity, and impacts of drought and the role of extreme weather events and climate variability in drought.

President Obama Statement following NIDIS Reauthorization Act

“Today, I signed the National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act into law. This bipartisan legislation ensures that the federal government can continue to provide timely, effective drought warning forecasts and vital support to communities that are vulnerable to drought. States, cities, towns, farmers, and businesses rely on tools and data from NIDIS to make informed decisions about water use, crop planting, wildfire response, and other critical areas...”



President Obama Statement following NIDIS Reauthorization Act

“...To complement NIDIS, as part of my Climate Action Plan, federal agencies have also formed a National Drought Resilience Partnership to help communities better prepare for droughts in the long term, and prevent the worst impacts on families and businesses. I commend Congress for passing this bipartisan bill to continue to build our national resilience to drought and help communities, farmers, businesses, and individuals better prepare and recover when disaster strikes...”

- March 6, 2014



Public Law 113-86 – NIDIS Report to Congress

- An analysis of the implementation of NIDIS, including how the information, forecasts, and assessments are utilized in drought policy planning and response activities
- Specific plans for continued development of such program, including future milestones
- An identification of research, monitoring, and forecasting needs to enhance the predictive capability of drought early warnings that include:
 - the length and severity of droughts
 - the contribution of weather events to reducing the severity or ending drought conditions
 - regionally specific drought impacts



Key issues addressed in Report

- How drought affected the Nation since 2006
- NIDIS partnerships & collaboration
- Core NIDIS activities
 - Regional DEWS
 - Integrating Monitoring & Predictions
 - Research for Coping with Drought
 - The U.S. Drought Portal – drought.gov
- How NIDIS informs drought planning & response
 - Benefits of the regional DEWS
 - The U.S. Drought Monitor
 - Building a coordinated National Soil Moisture Monitoring Network



Key issues addressed in Report

- Future developments and milestones
 - Improving the prediction of drought onset, length, and severity
 - Understanding & enhancing predictions of regionally specific drought impacts
 - Establishing the Drought Risk Management Research Center (DRMRC)

- Implementing the National Integrated Drought Early Warning System – page 16 – Near and long term activities and actions called for in the NIDIS Reauthorization Public Law



NIDIS Priorities for 2016-2020

- Improve the characterization of the onset, duration, and severity of drought across a variety of timescales
- Assess and respond to regionally-specific drought impacts, leveraging pre-existing networks and improved coordination
- Explore the role of extreme weather events in drought planning and risk management, and incorporate into drought early warning systems
- Strengthen National, tribal, regional, state, local, and international partnerships
- Expand the breadth of resources and accessibility of information available on the U.S. Drought Portal