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State of New York

Executive Chamber

No. 116

E X E C U T I V E O R D E R .

RECONSTITUTING THE STATE DROUGHT MANAGEMENT TASK FORCE

WHEREAS, section 20, subdivision (1)(c) of the Executive Law provides that state and local natural disaster and emergency response functions be coordinated in order to bring the fullest protection and benefit to the people;

WHEREAS, section 21 of the Executive Law created in the executive department a Disaster Preparedness Commission charged with studying all aspects of man-made or natural disaster prevention, response and recovery, preparing state disaster preparedness plans, to be approved by the governor, and directing state disaster operations and coordinating state disaster operations with local disaster operations following the declaration of a state disaster emergency;

WHEREAS, having determined that there is a need to reconstitute the State Drought Management Task Force in order for it to properly coordinate drought related activities and provide the Governor, State Disaster Preparedness Commission, and State Agency Heads with information needed to judge the degree of emergency and appropriate State response;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE E. PATAKI, Governor of the State of New York, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Laws of the State of New York, do hereby reconstitute the State Drought Management Task Force as follows:

I. Definitions

- A. "Drought Watch" shall mean the first stage of a developing drought event. This stage is declared by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) based on the Drought Forecasting Plan.
- B. "Drought Warning" shall mean the second stage of an impending or imminent severe drought event. This stage is also declared by the DEC based on the Drought Forecasting Plan. Other State agencies will respond as specified below and as detailed in the Drought Management Coordination Plan.
- C. "Drought Emergency" shall mean the third stage of existing severe and persistent drought conditions. This stage is declared by the State Disaster Preparedness Commission (DPC) who shall notify the effected public of actions to be taken.

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- D. "Drought Disaster" shall mean the fourth and most significant stage of persistent drought conditions at which a significant proportion of communities in the impacted area are unable to respond adequately. In response, an Executive Declaration and Order by the Governor may be necessary to marshal personnel and State resources.
- E. "Drought Forecasting Plan" shall mean a plan to evaluate regional drought conditions using indicators such as precipitation deficits, surface and ground water levels, reservoir storage and soil moisture conditions.
- F. "Drought Management Coordination Plan" or "the Plan" shall mean a plan to coordinate and implement the state and local response during drought conditions.
- G. "State Agency" shall mean any state department, board, bureau, division, commission, committee, public authority, public benefit corporation, council, office or other governmental entity performing a governmental or proprietary function for the state.
- H. "State Agency Head" shall mean the commissioner, chairman, chief executive officer, or highest ranking official for any "state agency," as defined in subdivision (G) above.
- I. "State Emergency Management Office" or "SEMO" shall mean the disaster and civil defense agency within the Division of Military and Naval Affairs as named in Executive Order No. 32, promulgated on December 29, 1983, as continued by Executive Order No. 3, promulgated on January 5, 1995.
- J. "Task Force" shall mean the State Drought Management Task Force.

II. Establishment of the State Drought Management Task Force

There is hereby established, under the jurisdiction of the DPC, a State Drought Management Task Force consisting of five voting members. The five voting members shall include the director of SEMO, who shall serve as the chairperson of the Task Force, and the commissioners of Environmental Conservation, Health, and Agriculture and Markets, and the chairperson of the State Thruway Authority. A Task Force member may designate a representative to attend meetings, in his or her place, and to act on his or her behalf. The members of the Task Force shall receive no additional compensation for services rendered pursuant to this Order. The mission of the Task Force is to provide the DPC with information needed to judge the degree of emergency and appropriate response.

III. Responsibilities of the State Drought Management Task Force

The State Drought Management Task Force shall have the following duties and responsibilities:

- A. To approve the State Drought Management Coordination Plan and periodically recommend and approve updates to such Plan.
- B. To coordinate drought related activities in accordance with the Plan;
- C. To recommend declarations of drought emergency to the DPC;
- D. To meet as needed to ensure adequate state response to drought conditions;
- E. To develop drought contingency plans in cooperation with local, state and federal agencies;

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- F. To develop and maintain a list of available resources meeting drought needs, including an inventory of federal programs; and
- G. To recommend needs for legislation, funds or other actions to improve State drought-response capabilities.

IV. Responsibilities of Individual Task Force Members

Individual Task Force members shall participate in DPC drought-response activities and have specific areas of responsibility including, but not limited to, the following:

A. State Emergency Management Office

- i) To prepare the State Drought Management Coordination Plan;
- ii) To chair the Task Force and schedule meetings as needed, including at least one meeting a month during drought warning conditions and at least two meetings a month during a drought emergency;
- iii) To, as directed by the Task Force, coordinate drought related activities with appropriate local, state and federal agencies;
- iv) To prepare drought updates and generally disseminate drought-related information;
- v) To advise and respond to drought-affected communities and coordinate implementation of recommended water-use restrictions; and
- vi) To maintain and make available stockpiles of pipe, pumps and other water transport and treatment equipment for use during emergency situations.

B. Department of Environmental Conservation

- i) To prepare a State Drought Forecasting Plan;
- ii) To monitor and evaluate technical data regarding meteorological and hydrological conditions from available sources on a regular basis;
- iii) To determine the current drought status for each region of the State;
- iv) To declare drought watches and drought warnings on a statewide or regional basis;
- v) To advise the Task Force during drought conditions and provide technical support;
- vi) To coordinate State drought declarations with interstate commissions; and
- vii) To ensure the protection of aquatic habitats during drought events.

C. Department of Health

- i) To review and approve requests for use of equipment from the SEMO stockpile;
- ii) To monitor surface water and groundwater supply storage levels once a month;
- iii) To intensify monitoring of drinking water supplies during drought events;
- iv) To timely report water supply levels to the DEC for incorporation into the calculation of drought indices;
- v) To obtain and review drought emergency plans from community water systems within drought affected areas and ensure that community water systems act in accordance with such plans.

D. Department of Agriculture & Markets

- i) To ensure that agriculture receives appropriate access to non-potable water supplies during drought events;
- ii) To coordinate and consult with Soil & Water Conservation Districts in assessing local groundwater conditions;

- iii) To assist in coordinating crop failure data compiled by county cooperative extensions;
- iv) To timely provide DEC and the Task Force with agricultural drought information.

E. Thruway Authority

- i) To report to the Task Force regarding the availability of canals and reservoirs to provide water to drought-affected regions of the State; and
- ii) To coordinate with SEMO on the availability of Thruway equipment for pumping and transporting water.

V. Assistance From Other Agencies

The Task Force may seek and shall receive from any other state agency any assistance necessary for the fulfillment of its responsibilities under this Order. Such assistance may include, but is not limited to, technical assistance, information, personnel, and equipment. All state agency recommendations for the declaration of a drought emergency shall be coordinated through the Task Force. The Task Force may seek advice and/or assistance from federal and local agencies, such as the U.S. Geological Survey, or municipal agencies.

VI. Voting

Only after a unanimous, affirmative vote of the Task Force, may a recommendation for the declaration of a drought emergency be made by the Task Force to the DPC.



G I V E N under my hand and the
Privy Seal of the State
in the City of Albany
this seventh day of
January in the year two
thousand two.

BY THE GOVERNOR

[Handwritten signature]
Secretary to the Governor

[Handwritten signature: M. E. Patelli]

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