

**NATIONAL DROUGHT POLICY COMMISSION**  
**Analysis of Public Comments**

**Background**

Public Law 105-99, 112 Stat. 641, provides, “*Sec. 4 DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION. (b)(4) determine what differences exist between the needs of those affected by drought and the Federal laws and programs designed to mitigate the impacts of and respond to drought.*”

**Methodology**

The National Drought Policy Commission invited the public to attend seven public hearings that were held throughout the Nation between July 1999 and February 2000. Following is a list of the meeting places, dates, and number of respondents at each hearing. A total of 140 respondents testified at public hearings. There were 40 additional written or telephone comments provided for consideration.

<b>Meeting Place</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
Washington, DC	7/22/99	5
Washington, DC	9/22/99	22
El Paso, Texas	10/13/99	5
Los Angeles, California	12/1/99	20
Austin, Texas	1/25/00	24
Atlanta, Georgia	2/3/00	18
Billings, Montana	2/17/00	46

Written comments and transcripts of oral testimony from the hearings are on file with the Commission Office at the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D. C.

The Commission’s draft report, “Preparing for Drought in the New Millennium” was published on March 8, 2000, with a public comment period through March 31. Seventy comments were received in response to the draft report. In total, 250 comments were reviewed by the Commission. The draft report was modified, taking into careful consideration all the comments received before and after the draft report was published.

**Overview**

**Primary Issues Raised by the Public**

1. The need for better coordination among Federal programs and between states was a recurring comment.

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2. Producers with small farms and ranches indicated an increased vulnerability to drought and feel more at risk than larger enterprises. They also felt "left out" of assistance programs.
3. The requirement for continued and better monitoring and predictive capability at the national and regional levels was mentioned frequently.
4. The timeliness of assistance and a review/overhaul of crop insurance were noted.
5. There was considerable discussion on management of the proposed National Drought Council and coordination among Federal, state, regional, Tribal, and local jurisdictions.

**Comments Grouped According to the Commission's Goals**

All public comments received have been categorized according to the primary subjects covered in the comment as it is related to the specific goals of the Commission. This table provides a summary of the goals and the number of related comments. The subject of each comment often covered multiple goals; therefore, the numbers in the table are greater than the total number of comments.

<b>Goals</b>	<b>Related Comments</b>
1. Preparedness	133
2. Science/Technology	113
3. Risk Management	56
4. Response	99
5. Coordination	101
6. Other	51

Additional information is available from the National Drought Policy Commission. You can access the information at the Commission's web site: [www.fsa.usda.gov/drought](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/drought). All files can be ordered in electronic format or hard copy. Write: National Drought Policy Commission, USDA/FSA/AO, 1400 Independence Avenue SW, Mail Stop 0501, Washington, D.C. 20250-0501.

\* A list of acronyms used in this file will print at the end of the report or the meanings for individual acronyms will display by clicking on the acronym.