
conclusion reached by the Senate Task Force on Funding Disaster Relief in March 1995, among other entities. It was universally supported within the Commission and by the overwhelming majority of people who commented on the draft version of this report.

Basis of Recommendations

The Commission's recommendations are based on our findings about the gaps among what is needed and what is provided by state, regional, local, tribal, and federal drought programs and laws. The findings stem from information presented by witnesses at our public hearings across the country and in written comments submitted independently, as well as from our own experience.

In keeping with the law that established the Commission, our recommendations relate primarily to the federal government's role in national drought policy. We view the federal government as one of many partners needed to reduce the impacts of drought. Much of the work must be accomplished by state, local, and tribal governments and regional entities such as river basin planning commissions and water districts. As our recommendations attest, federal resources should be used to augment the vital drought-related programs of these other entities.

Summary of Recommendations

We recommend first that Congress pass a National Drought Preparedness Act to establish a nonfederal/federal partnership through a National Drought Council as described in Recommendation 5.1 in the recommendations section of this report. The primary function of the Council is to ensure that the goals of national drought policy are achieved. Our five goals are:

1. Incorporate planning, implementation of plans and proactive mitigation measures, risk management, resource stewardship, environmental considerations, and public education as the key elements of effective national drought policy.
2. Improve collaboration among scientists and managers to enhance the effectiveness of observation networks, monitoring, prediction, information delivery, and applied research and to foster public understanding of and preparedness for drought.
3. Develop and incorporate comprehensive insurance and financial strategies into drought preparedness plans.
4. Maintain a safety net of emergency relief that emphasizes sound stewardship of natural resources and self-help.
5. Coordinate drought programs and response effectively, efficiently, and in a customer-oriented manner.