



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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Contact: Seth Effron
Phone: 919/733-5612

GOV. EASLEY ANNOUNCES 59 N.C. COUNTIES DESIGNATED DISASTER AREAS DUE TO DROUGHT-RELATED CROP DAMAGE

Conservation Urged As Four Western N.C. Counties Return to Worst Drought Category

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley announced today the U.S. Department of Agriculture has granted his request to have 59 counties designated as disaster areas due to crop losses caused by drought and extreme heat during 2008. Easley had asked for the disaster declaration on Oct. 3 due to excessive agricultural losses for at least one major crop, and significant losses on corn, soybeans, hay, and pasture and other forage crops. He also called for residents to continue water conservation efforts, especially in western North Carolina, which has not experienced the recovery from the drought seen in other parts of the state.

“I am pleased the U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved our call to help an industry that is a significant part of the North Carolina economy,” said Easley. “While most parts of the state have now recovered from the drought, that does not change the fact that many of our farmers suffered crop losses due to drought for two straight years, and they need help to recover.”

The 59 counties approved in Easley’s request are:

Alleghany	Clay	Henderson	Onslow	Stanly
Ashe	Cleveland	Hyde	Orange	Surry
Avery	Columbus	Jackson	Pender	Swain
Beaufort	Craven	Jones	Perquimans	Transylvania
Brunswick	Davidson	Lenoir	Person	Tyrrell
Buncombe	Davie	Macon	Pitt	Washington
Burke	Duplin	Madison	Polk	Watauga
Cabarrus	Durham	Martin	Robeson	Wayne
Caldwell	Gates	McDowell	Rockingham	Wilkes
Caswell	Graham	Mecklenburg	Rutherford	Wilson
Cherokee	Greene	Nash	Sampson	Yadkin
Chowan	Haywood	New Hanover	Scotland	

Under USDA rules, 37 contiguous counties were also included in the disaster declaration. Those counties are:

Alamance	Chatham	Guilford	Mitchell	Stokes
Alexander	Cumberland	Halifax	Montgomery	Union
Anson	Dare	Harnett	Moore	Wake
Bertie	Edgecombe	Hertford	Pamlico	Warren
Bladen	Forsyth	Hoke	Pasquotank	Yancey
Camden	Franklin	Iredell	Randolph	
Carteret	Gaston	Johnston	Richmond	
Catawba	Granville	Lincoln	Rowan	

The declaration makes farm operators in both primary and contiguous counties eligible to be considered for assistance from the U.S. Farm Service Agency, provided eligibility requirements are met. Assistance includes low interest emergency loans and the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program approved as part of the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008.

Farmers should contact the Farm Service Agency office in their county for more information. For county FSA contact information, go to www.fsa.usda.gov and click on “State Offices,” then on “North Carolina” and “County Offices.”

Last Thursday, the U.S. Drought Monitor returned four western counties to exceptional drought, the worst level of the four drought categories. Clay, Jackson, Macon and Transylvania counties are back in exceptional drought due to the majority of stream flow measurements being at or near record lows.

“Autumn is usually one of our driest times of the year, so there is little chance of getting enough rain to pull these counties out of the drought before hot weather and increased water demands return next year,” Easley said. “Conditions could get worse before they improve, so in western North Carolina especially, people should be saving water wherever they can.”

In addition to the four counties in exceptional drought, 10 counties are in extreme drought, 13 counties are in severe drought, 29 counties are in a moderate drought, 17 counties are abnormally dry and the remaining 27 counties are in no category at all. Abnormally dry conditions indicate that drought is not present but could return without adequate rainfall.

Many residents continue to heed the governor’s calls for water conservation. More than 3.14 million people, or 73 percent of the people who receive water from systems the state tracks, must adhere to voluntary or mandatory water use restrictions, according to the state Division of Water Resources. For more information on the drought or water conservation, go to www.SaveWaterNC.org.

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