

**Third Extraordinary Session
Sixty-third General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. M02S-2064.01 Emily Hager

HM02S-1001

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Coleman

House Committees

HOUSE MEMORIAL 02S-1001

101 **MEMORIALIZING CONGRESS TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL CROP AND**
102 **LIVESTOCK ASSISTANCE DUE TO DROUGHT.**

1 WHEREAS, Snowpack levels and precipitation from rainfall have
2 been far below normal for many western states, including Colorado; and

3 WHEREAS, Facing one of the most severe droughts in the state's
4 history, all Colorado counties have been designated disaster areas, as dry
5 conditions have greatly reduced the ability of farmers and ranchers to
6 produce their commodities and to provide related services; and

7 WHEREAS, The lack of moisture will drastically decrease the
8 harvest of many Colorado crops, such as wheat which is expected to yield
9 a crop that is 25-40% of a normal yield; and

10 WHEREAS, Irrigated farms on average have received only 15%
11 of the water they normally use for crop production; and

12 WHEREAS, In addition to making it more difficult to raise crops,
13 the extreme dryness also carries with it several secondary concerns, such
14 as the loss of top soil, soil erosion, and an increased possibility of insect
15 infestation; and

16 WHEREAS, Farmers who are unable to produce any crop at all
17 become ineligible for federal farm programs that would otherwise provide
18 financial assistance to equalize the market price and the county target
19 price; and

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

1 WHEREAS, The suffering state of agriculture directly impacts the
2 prospects of raising livestock, by way of low-yielding feeder crops,
3 limited harvest foliage and forage, and the increasing price of hay and
4 other feed; and

5 WHEREAS, Livestock auction barns in the west are extending
6 their sale hours to accommodate the large numbers of livestock being sold
7 because ranchers cannot afford to feed their herds; and

8 WHEREAS, There is no insurance available for suffering livestock
9 producers; and

10 WHEREAS, Livestock and crop prices alike have been low since
11 1997, giving producers very little financial cushion for hard times; and

12 WHEREAS, The financial impact caused by the drought could be
13 devastating to Colorado's agricultural community, but will also have an
14 overall effect on the economy of the entire state; and

15 WHEREAS, An allocation of nearly \$2.5 billion for disaster
16 assistance was originally included in the federal Farm Security and Rural
17 Investment Act of 2002, commonly known as the "2002 Farm Bill", but
18 this allocation was removed during conference committee deliberations
19 on the bill; and

20 WHEREAS, Members of Congress subsequently tried to make
21 disaster assistance moneys available by including an allocation in another
22 bill, but unfortunately, this attempt failed as well; now, therefore,

23 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the Sixty-third*
24 *General Assembly of the State of Colorado:*

25 That we, the members of the House of Representatives, strongly
26 urge the United States Congress:

27 (1) To examine and adopt measures to allow producers of
28 agricultural commodities to receive short-term assistance in coping with
29 and responding to the drought conditions, such as the following:

30 (a) Directing the United States Department of Agriculture to
31 coordinate the availability of hay and other types of livestock feed for
32 those ranchers in drought areas from areas that are still producing
33 adequate amounts of such feed;

34 (b) Implementing tax code modifications that enable producers
35 who are forced to sell livestock during periods of drought to receive
36 additional time to reinvest the sale proceeds before having to pay capital
37 gains tax on the earnings, thus allowing the producer to wait until the
38 drought conditions have subsided before reinvesting;

39 (c) Allocating funds in the \$4-5 billion range to provide crop and
40 livestock producers with direct emergency assistance to be delivered
41 through existing Farm Service Agency channels;

1 (2) To develop comprehensive and integrated public policy that
2 identifies and implements long-term plans for combating the impact of
3 droughts, including components such as:

4 (a) Reexamining how drought relief assistance is provided and
5 elevating the manner in which it is provided to place drought assistance
6 on the same level of assistance that is provided to other natural disasters
7 such as wildfires, hurricanes, and floods;

8 (b) Researching farming methods and seed varieties that are
9 resistant to drought and long periods of low moisture;

10 (c) Examining the feasibility of prioritizing water allocations;

11 (d) Establishing a National Drought Council within the Federal
12 Emergency Management Agency to provide an integrated and
13 coordinated approach toward minimizing the effects of drought and to
14 educate and inform American citizens on how to prepare for and respond
15 to drought emergencies;

16 (e) More closely considering water availability when creating
17 public policy to manage growth, not only for consumption purposes, but
18 also being mindful of future drought potential as well.

19 *Be It Further Resolved*, That copies of this Memorial be sent to the
20 President of the United States, the Majority Leader of the United States
21 Senate, the Minority Leader of the United States Senate, the Majority
22 Leader of the United States House of Representatives, the Minority
23 Leader of the United States House of Representatives, and to each
24 member of the Colorado Congressional Delegation.