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New Mexico Drought Preparedness Act of 2015

Congress: 114 (2015–2017, Ended)

Chamber: Senate

Policy Area: Water Resources Development

Introduced: Aug 4, 2015

Current Status: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 114-381.

Latest Action: Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 114-381. (Oct 8, 2015)

Official Text: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/senate-bill/1936>

Sponsor

Name: Sen. Udall, Tom [D-NM]

Party: Democratic • **State:** NM • **Chamber:** Senate

Cosponsors (1 total)

Cosponsor	Party / State	Role	Date Joined
Sen. Heinrich, Martin [D-NM]	D · NM		Aug 4, 2015

Committee Activity

Committee	Chamber	Activity	Date
Energy and Natural Resources Committee	Senate	Hearings By (full committee)	Oct 8, 2015

Subjects & Policy Tags

Policy Area:

Water Resources Development

Related Bills

No related bills are listed.

New Mexico Drought Preparedness Act of 2015

Directs the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Commissioner of Reclamation (Secretary), to carry out a water acquisition program in specified basins in New Mexico, under which the Secretary shall: (1) make acquisitions of water by lease or purchase of water rights or contractual entitlements from willing lessors or sellers; and (2) take other actions to enhance stream flow to benefit fish and wildlife, water quality, and river ecosystem restoration and to enhance stewardship and conservation of working land, water, and watersheds.

Authorizes the Secretary, in cooperation with the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District, to provide funding and technical assistance for the installation of metering and measurement devices and the construction of check structures on irrigation diversions, canals, laterals, ditches, and drains to: (1) ensure the conservation and efficient use of water within the District by reducing actual consumptive use or by not increasing the use of water, and (2) improve the measurement and allocation of water acquired through such water acquisition program.

Requires the Secretary to provide for development of a comprehensive plan for the San Acacia and Isleta reaches to plan, design, construct, and prioritize projects that balance river maintenance, water availability, use, and delivery, and ecosystem benefits.

Requires the Secretary of the Army to continue, for five years after enactment of this Act, the temporary deviation in the operation of Cochiti Lake and Jemez Canyon Dam that was initiated in 2009 and terminated in 2013, to evaluate the benefits of the deviation while a permanent reauthorization of the reservoirs is pursued.

Requires the Secretaries to: (1) conduct a feasibility study to address Cochiti Dam operation limitations on the timing, magnitude, and duration of flows that support federally listed species in the Middle Rio Grande; (2) submit a feasibility report on the reauthorization of the purposes of Cochiti Dam; and (3) enter into an arrangement with the National Academy of Sciences to study water and reservoir management and operation issues along the Rio Grande.

Authorizes financial assistance to be made available for eligible water projects to help New Mexico and other Western states address drought-related impacts to water supplies or any other immediate water-related crisis or conflict.

Amends the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (OPLMA) to: (1) authorize the use of water management improvement grants to assist applicants in planning for or addressing the impacts of drought, (2) authorize the Commissioner of Reclamation to waive any cost-share requirements to address emergency drought situations and to prioritize projects based on drought relief benefits, and (3) authorize appropriations for such grants.

Reauthorizes appropriations for: (1) the Reclamation States Emergency Drought Relief Act of 1991, and (2) Rio Grande Pueblos infrastructure grants under OPLMA.

Authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to allocate certain financial assistance made available under the Food Security Act of 1985 (FSA) to establish special conservation initiatives to assist producers in implementing eligible activities on agricultural land in the western states for: (1) mitigating the effects of drought; (2) improving water quality and quantity; (3) restoring, enhancing, and preserving fish and wildlife habitat; and (4) promoting innovative and collaborative conservation tools and approaches.

Amends the FSA to provide that areas eligible for designation as conservation priority areas shall include areas with actual and significant water quantity impacts related to agricultural production activities.

Actions Timeline

- **Oct 8, 2015:** Committee on Energy and Natural Resources. Hearings held. Hearings printed: S.Hrg. 114-381.
- **Aug 4, 2015:** Introduced in Senate
- **Aug 4, 2015:** Read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.