

# OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE EMERGENCY DROUGHT COMMISSION

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
September 19, 2023

The Emergency Drought Commission met in regular session at 1:30 p.m., September 19, 2023, in the Agriculture Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Written notice of this meeting was filed with the Secretary of State. A notice was posted at the Agriculture Building 24 hours prior to the meeting setting forth thereon the date, time, place and agenda for the meeting and an agenda was posted on the agency website.

Members Present: Ms. Arthur  
Ms. Cunningham  
Mr. Emerson  
Ms. Knauf Owen  
Mr. Nichols

Others Present: Michaela Lembeck, Executive Assistant  
JanLee Rowlett, Deputy Commissioner  
Lee Benson, Public Information Officer  
Senator Darcy Jech  
David Oakley, LegisOK  
Phil Campbell  
KC Sheperd, Oklahoma Farm Reports  
Janet Stewart, Conservation Commission  
Steve Carson, Senator Lankford's Office  
Sara Gibson, Water Resource Board  
Marla Peek, OK Farm Bureau  
Taylor Marshall, Conservation Commission  
Clancy Green, Conservation Commission  
Tammy Sawatzky, Conservation Commission  
Jake Searock, Conservation Commission

Ms. Arthur called the meeting to order, and a quorum was declared.

The commission approved minutes from the August 23, 2023.

The vote was as follows:

Arthur	Aye
Cunningham	Aye
Emerson	Aye
Knauf Owen	Aye
Nichols	Aye

Public Comments:

Mr. Campbell expressed his desire to see the Commission move forward with dispersing the additional funding in a prompt manner.

Seeing no further public comment, Ms. Knauf Owen went over data collected by the Conservation Commission districts. She expressed that the districts felt ready to take on the additional funding. Main concerns fell on the December 2, 2023, deadline. She proposed that this deadline be pushed to June 30, 2024.

The Commission discussed the difficulties of operating in an emergency capacity while also desiring to provide clear, proper guidance to the districts.

Ms. Arthur asked the Conservation Commission what the districts require as the Commission prepares to roll out the additional \$17 million from the Legislature.

The Conservation Commission spoke to needing consistency in documents required across the districts as well as for the documents to contain stronger language, holding producers accountable to whatever work they are claiming to be completing.

Ms. Cunningham desired to have the department's legal counsels look at the current language in the documents required of producers throughout the application process for emergency drought funding.

Mr. Campbell requested that any changes to the application process come down from the Emergency Drought Commission as a means of simplifying things and creating uniformity across the districts.

Ms. Arthur looked for a motion.

Ms. Knauf Owen motioned to release the \$17 million in funding and to extend the deadline to June 30, 2024.

Mr. Nichols seconded.

The vote was as follows:

Arthur	Aye
Cunningham	Aye
Emerson	Aye
Nichols	Aye
Knauf Owen	Aye

The motion carried.

Ms. Knauf Owen motioned to have the Emergency Drought Commission provide oversight to the districts on updating the self-certification form to include location of the practice completed; photos if available of that practice; notifying them of the extended deadline for the program; and granting them the authority and responsibility to investigate/pursue any challenges of wrongdoing or misappropriation of funding for a practice, including spot checks. Districts are tasked with informing participants of this update.

Ms. Cunningham seconded.

The vote was as follows:

Arthur	Aye
Cunningham	Aye
Emerson	Aye
Nichols	Aye
Knauf Owen	Aye

The motion carried.

Ms. Knauf Owen expressed that the districts would be pleased with the additional funding as well as feeling supported by the Commission.

Ms. Arthur thanked the Legislature for being responsive to the situation by directing funds during special session last summer as well as during this legislative session.

Ms. Arthur asked if there was any new business.

There was no old business presented for the Board to take action upon. Mr. Emerson moved, Mr. Knauf Owen seconded, that the meeting be adjourned at 2:25 P.M.

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Executive Secretary