Planning for Multi-Year Drought

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Does Washington State’s Drought Framework anticipate multi-year droughts?

Yes, but with limitations.

Drought orders must specify a termination date.

• Not later than 1 calendar year from the date of issuance.
• Ecology may – with the Governor’s approval – amend the order up to 2 years.
Washington’s “Odd-year | Even-year” Legislative Cycle

Long session = 105 days

Short session = 60 days
If drought is going to happen, preferably it would be obvious before the Legislature leaves town.
Legislative recognition of resiliency vs emergency response (ESHB 1622 – Passed 2020)

1 Sec. 2. RCW 43.83B.400 and 1989 c 171 s 1 are each amended to read as follows:

21 The legislature also recognizes that effective emergency drought response is predicated on building resiliency and preparedness before water shortages occur. Therefore, it is also the intent of the legislature that the department assist water users by supporting measures to strengthen the resiliency and preparedness of water users to drought conditions in the long term.

https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1622&Year=2019
Eligible project types for drought resiliency funding

- Storage
- Source substitution
- Development of alternate and backup supplies
- Conservation and efficiency infrastructure and education
- Promotion of reclaimed water use
- Development of local drought contingency plans
- Mitigation of emergency withdrawals
- Fish and wildlife mitigation
- Emergency water recreational facilities
Keep your eye on this space
Thank you

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Washington’s Legislative Cycle

Odd Years (Long Session)
• Begin: Second Monday in January
• End: 105 days later (~third Week of April)

Even Years (Short Session)
• Begin: Second Monday in January
• End: 60 days later (~first week of March)