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## President Trump approves National Integrated Drought Information System Reauthorization Act

January 7, 2019

On January 7, President Donald Trump signed the National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS) Reauthorization Act (S. 2200) into law. The bill, first introduced by Senator John Thune (R-SD) and former Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) in December 2017, reauthorizes funding for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's NIDIS program through fiscal year (FY) 2023.

NIDIS provides drought information to farmers, ranchers, and other industries affected by extreme weather.

Under the NIDIS Reauthorization Act, the interagency program would be authorized to partner with citizen scientists, in addition to the private sector and academic institutions. This provision facilitates the development of novel partnerships and offers a framework for increasing public awareness and education. According to Representative Lamar Smith (R-TX), the act has "made tremendous advances in the accuracy and timeliness of weather forecasting and the rapid integration of the private sector."

The bill also recommends increased funding for NIDIS from \$13.5 million in FY 2019 to \$14.5 million in FY 2023, an increase that can help fund a proposed Earth Prediction Innovation Center focused on reclaiming and maintaining international leadership in the area of numerical weather prediction.

Other key points of the bill include prioritizing a national coordinated soil moisture monitoring network and reauthorizing an algal blooms and hypoxia program to assess harmful algal blooms and accelerate the implementation of effective intervention and mitigation methods to reduce their impacts.

*Sources: American Institute of Physics; E&E News; Library of Congress; U.S Drought Portal.*

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