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news release

For Immediate Release: 21 June 1996

FEMA TO COORDINATE DEVELOPMENT OF MULTI-STATE DROUGHT TASK FORCE

WASHINGTON, DC -- South Texas Representative Kika de la Garza today announced that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), at the request of President Clinton and as a result of the severe drought conditions in numerous southwestern states, will be coordinating the development of a Multi-State Drought Task Force. The Task Force will be comprised of representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U S Department of Agriculture, U S Department of Interior, U S Army Corps of Engineers, U S Department of Labor, U S Department of Commerce, and the Small Business Administration. The Chair of the Task Force will be R I "Buddy" Young, FEMA Region VI Director. Other Departments or Agencies may be added as appropriate.

The focus of the Task Force is the development of a State and Federal partnership to evaluate and assess drought relief programs available from Federal, State, and local agencies. The Task Force is charged with coordinating the most effective and most efficient access to drought relief programs provided by all levels of government. Each of the eight States in the designated drought area have formed or will be forming their own State task force to determine current drought related conditions, provide long-range projections, and identify their State's needs. FEMA will coordinate the actions of the Task Force, and offer technical assistance to the States as they identify service needs.

The initial meeting of the Task Force will be held this coming week in Albuquerque, New Mexico, on Wednesday, June 26 and Thursday, June 27.

"This severe drought has created devastating problems for so many," Congressman de la Garza stated, "and it is good that people and agencies are working together to find much needed solutions, and to afford relief and assistance. It is exactly these type coordinated efforts that are necessary to most effectively address the situation."

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