

USEA To Hold Press Briefing on 2022 Wildfire Season and Drought

The dry West and Southwest are bracing for spark ignition wildfires.

WASHINGTON DC, USA, February 18, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Wildfires were catastrophic across the West and the Southwest last summer. Coupled with the continuing megadrought, this was a huge burden for utilities across a wide area of the country.



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Llewellyn King

As part of its continuing series of virtual press briefings, the United States Energy Association will probe the threat in the West and Southwest in 2022 on Friday, Feb. 25, at 11 a.m. ET.

A panel of hands-on utility executives will be questioned by a gallery of knowledgeable reporters about plans to control spark ignition this summer. Already it is hotter and drier than normal across much of those regions, and

forecasters at the National Weather Service have said that drought conditions will persist through the spring, which will set the stage for wildfires and reduced hydroelectric production.

The expert panelists will be questioned on how they coped in the past and how they hope to avert disaster this year. [USEA](#) Acting Executive Director Sheila Hollis will launch the briefing. It has been organized and will be moderated by Llewellyn King, nationally syndicated columnist and broadcaster.

For this briefing, the special presenter is Paul Pastelok, Lead Long-Range Forecaster at AccuWeather.

The experts:

- Maria Pope, President and CEO, Portland General Electric
- Sarah Clark, AMI Coordinator, Utilities Department, Town of Estes Park, Colorado
- Ruth Marks, Vice President, Transmission Maintenance, Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association
- Scott Corwin, Executive Director, Northwest Power Association

The reporters:

- Ken Silverstein, Forbes
- Jennifer Hiller, The Wall Street Journal
- Markham Hislop, Energi Media (British Columbia)
- Linda Gasparello, "[White House Chronicle](#)," PBS

"All the executives on the panel for this briefing are seasoned and have dealt with wildfires in the past. Also, all of their utilities are actively working on mitigation this spring and summer. Most utilities and local governments, as well as states, are aware that this could be another catastrophic wildfire season and they don't want to be caught short," King said.

He added: "Nonetheless, how successful they will be depends on the severity of conditions: The decades-long drought doesn't augur well for the affected areas. Reporters and attendees will learn about the full scope of the threat and what defensive measures are in place. The USDA's Forest Service, DOE and FEMA are all involved -- at the barricades, so to speak."

This briefing will be held live on Zoom, and will last one hour. Following it, a recording will be available on the USEA website <https://www.usea.org>.

All registrants are welcome to submit questions via the Zoom Q&A function, but members of the press will be given preference in the questioning.

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