

Subject: Request 2025-FSA-08431-F - Bocinsky - Final Response
Date: Thursday, September 4, 2025 at 13:10:25 Mountain Daylight Time
From: SM.FPAC.BC.FOIA
To: Bocinsky, Kyle, SM.FPAC.BC.FOIA
CC: Vander Linden, Christina - FPAC-FBC, MO, Nagel, Carol - FPAC-FBC, ND, Nguyen, Hani - FPAC-FBC, MN
Attachments: image002.png, Original Request.pdf

Dr. Bocinsky,

This responds to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request (copy attached) dated July 17, 2025 and assigned control number 2025-FSA-08431-F.

In response to your request, we compiled and are releasing in full, the National Drought Mitigation Center (NDMC)s geodatabase that contains the current county boundaries.

According to the program owner, the boundaries are from the ESRI dataset from 2008 and are considered the industry standard for all geopolitical boundaries and reference layers. The NDMC obtained these layers prior to the 2008 Farm Bill first that included relief programs associated with the USDM as county level statistics and maps were available when the transition to GIS map development took place. The NDMC uses this data to have a consistent value for the various counties that have not changed since they were first incorporated in 2008. The NDMC has had to update some counties during this time due to changes made in redrawing and/or renaming counties and with new FIPS creations. The last such change being in 2021 that included an Alaska boundary change. This was a relatively simple change as Alaska doesn't touch any other states with the updates not affecting the rest of the United States. The other most recent change was in 2019 that included a county name and FIPS change in South Dakota and that did not require a geometry change. The next anticipated changes that will be required are in Connecticut due to a redraw and renaming of their county level jurisdictions that were initiated at the state level. This change will be made within the existing detailed boundaries and shapefiles of these new jurisdiction units. We will be redrawing the internal boundaries based on the best available data, either from the U.S. Census, the state of Connecticut, or commercial (ESRI) sources and the NDMC will need to work directly with USDA to determine exactly how these will be implemented with regards to programs triggered by the USDM. This process has been our standard for updating changing geometry in base datasets that are used in the weekly calculations. All the data utilized in the weekly calculations are freely available on the United States Drought Monitor website under the "data" tab: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/Data.aspx>. The final data are updated each week during the official release of the USDM map and associated statistics and data information. These data are also the same data utilized in the making of the North American Drought Monitor. The NDMC is the official home and archive of all the data, maps, and information related to the United States Drought Monitor, and all this information is freely available at <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

Your responsive records have been uploaded to box, a secure way for us to share data. You should receive an invitation to box from the site. If you don't receive it, please visit <https://account.box.com/login> to retrieve your documents. Please retrieve your documents on or before: **December 3, 2025**. If you have any problems retrieving your documents, contact us. Request 2025-FSA-08431-F is officially closed.

We trust that this information fully satisfies your request. If you have any questions regarding this

request, please contact Government Information (GI) Specialist Christina Vander Linden at 816-823-2669. If GI Specialist Christina Vander Linden is not available, please contact GI Specialist Carol Nagel at 701-530-2107 or GI Specialist Hani Nguyen at 651-602-7848. We can also be reached at the group e-mail address SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov.

Sincerely,

Patrick McLoughlin

Patrick McLoughlin

FOIA Officer

FPAC-BC External Affairs Division | FOIA Team

FOIA Team e: SM.FP.FOIA@usda.gov



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