

Committee Is Charting Weather Modification

By Bill Kronholm

Fourteen members of a new state committee met this morning to chart what Gov. Hall termed "a daring, but a very practical inquiry into the possibilities, means and ramifications of weather modification."

The committee, composed of agriculture and urban leaders from across the state, is designed to

find ways of ending the state's extended drought.

"Adequate rainfall is more than a savings," Hall said today in an opening address. "It is a bounty; it's a moral inspiration; it's a spiritual inspiration, and it's a necessity."

"Our billion-dollar agriculture economy depends on moisture. Our nation's food and fiber supply depends heavily on Oklaho-

ma farms.

"With these thoughts, I ask this committee to study weather modification. Your proposals and your suggestions may be channeled through me so we can adopt them and make them part of our legislative program," the governor said.

Today's session was primarily introductory, with some members meeting each other for the first time.

Much of the morning session was devoted to expressions of concern about the water shortage.

However, indications were that the committee will focus on two possible projects: transporting water from water-rich northeast Oklahoma to the southwestern plains and establishing a cloud-seeding generator system in parched areas of the southwest.

Ferdie Deering, chairman of the committee, said he had confirmed a price of about \$15 per square mile per year for setting up the generator system.

The price came from a California firm, Irving P. Krick, Inc., which now has cloud-seeding contracts in New Mexico.

Deering said the rate would come to about 2½ cents per acre.

The proposed water transportation system has not been mentioned in public interviews before today's meeting. But Gov. Hall cited it specifically in his address as a way in which "our western regions would bloom with new injections of waters."

Neither a method nor price of transporting water was discussed.

The meeting, at the state agriculture board office in the Capitol, was to continue this afternoon.

Deering, editor of The Farmer-Stockman, said the rest of today's session would be largely spent in subcommittee appointments.



Gov. Hall addresses new committee as chairman Ferdie Deering, left, looks on. (Times Staff Photo by Robert Taylor)

Cloud Seeding Sought in 12 Counties

By Jeff Holladay

Gov. Hall's weather modification study committee announced Tuesday a program of cloud seeding will be launched next month in 12 drought-stricken southwestern Oklahoma counties — if financing can be obtained.

Ferdie J. Deering, editor of the Farmer-Stockman and chairman of the 14-member committee, said a fund drive would be started immediately among individuals, corporations, municipalities, farm and ranch organizations and state and federal agencies.

Federal organizations from which funds will be sought include the Office of Emergency Preparedness and the Division of Atmospheric Research of the Bureau of Reclamation.

Deering said clouds in the 10,864 square-mile area could be seeded with dry ice at a cost of about \$162,960 — or slightly over 2½ cents per acre — for a period of a year.

Counties designated in the proposal are Beckham, Caddo, Comanche, Cotton, Custer, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Kiowa, Roger

Mills, Tillman, and Washita.

The committee, whose action Tuesday was in the form of a recommendation to the governor, urged prompt action because of long-range weather forecasts that the southwestern area of the United States is now in an extended period of drought which will peak sometime in 1975.

Deering said the committee had scheduled another meeting next Monday with Irving Krick, Denver meteorologist, who has 20 years experience in

cloud seeding.

The committee, which recommended Krick to head the project, also recommended that Oklahoma continue efforts to develop a long-range plan for the entire state, in cooperation with adjacent states, beginning in January 1972.

"By the time the committee meets next week, we hope to have some idea of the sources of revenue available," Deering said. "The Office of Emergency Preparedness does have funds it can allocate for emergency areas, and this

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Sooners Seek Cloud Seeding

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12-county area we have designated for the program is included, so we are eligible for funds there," he said.

The Bureau of Reclamation's division of atmospheric research in Denver, he said, "is interested in experimental projects and has allocated funds for such projects in Texas and other areas."

Deering emphasized that September was normally one of the best moisture months in Oklahoma, and said he hoped the program could be underway by then.

"We have abundant scientific evidence that weather modification works, and it would seem unwise for us not to use it in such a critical situation as we have in this state," Deering said.

"It would be a conservative estimate to say that the cost to Oklahoma farmers and ranchers from this drought has been \$100 million," Deering said. "So the cost of this weather modification program would seem pretty small alongside of that."

"I believe that if this program was used over a period of a year that it would mean that pastures would get back in better condition, that farmers in the area would be able to harvest considerably more cotton and grain than they have, and that some of the water strain on municipal governments would be alleviated," Deering said.

Based on the weather pattern, he said, "there probably wouldn't be much chance of getting any moisture in August, but September has historically been one of our wetter months."