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EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to the Occurrence of Wildfires and the Imminent Threat of Additional Wildfire Activity Due to Drought Conditions

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, Colorado Revised Statute § 24-32-2104, I, Bill Owens, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order making certain funds available from the Emergency Management Fund for wildfire suppression and mitigation activities.

1. Background and Purpose.

Due to drought conditions, Colorado's 2002 fire season is approximately 6-7 weeks ahead of schedule. The western and southeastern parts of Colorado are facing severe drought conditions and the remainder of the state is facing moderate drought conditions. The Colorado Division of Forestry reports that 10-Hour Fuels (grasses, small woody twigs, and other brush) are currently at 1-4% of normal moisture and 1000 Hour Fuels (wood materials 3 inches and larger) are at 6-10% of normal moisture.

Most significantly, 283 wildfires have already burned 7664 acres in the State of Colorado during the very early part of the 2002 fire season. These figures indicate that the potential for an active 2002 fire season is high. Enhanced suppression and mitigation activities are immediately necessary to respond to that risk.

As envisioned by the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act of 1992, threats to the public safety of this magnitude confer upon the Governor unique powers and responsibilities. As Governor, I am responsible for meeting the dangers to the state and people presented by disasters. The Act defines disasters as the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damage, injury, or loss of life or property resulting from any natural cause or cause of human origin, including but not limited to fire. C.R.S. § 24-32-2103 (1.5).

Because resources are immediately necessary to increase the level of fire suppression capability due to actual burning conditions and the imminent threat of additional fires, I issue this Executive Order making certain Emergency Management Funds immediately available for wildfire suppression and mitigation activities.

2. Mission.

I hereby find that a state of disaster emergency exists due to the occurrence of wildfires. Additionally, I find that there is an imminent threat of additional wildfire activity due to drought conditions.

Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-32-2106, I order \$450,000 in disaster emergency funds be made immediately available for wildfire suppression and mitigation activities.

3. Duration.

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from its date of signature unless extended by Executive Order.

GIVEN under my hand and
the Executive Seal of the
State of Colorado, this 23rd day
of April, 2002.

Bill Owens
Governor