

**D 006 05**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER**

**Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to a Wildfire in Pueblo and Custer Counties and Ordering to State Active Duty Certain Elements of the Colorado National Guard**

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Colorado, and pursuant to the relevant portions of the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, §24-32-2100 *et seq.*, C.R.S., I, Bill Owens, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order declaring a state of disaster emergency.

1. Background and Need.

On Wednesday, July 7, 2005, a lightning sparked fire originated in southern Colorado. Due to dry conditions and heavy winds, this fire quickly escalated into a major wildfire in Pueblo and Custer Counties. As of this time, the “Mason Fire” has burned approximately 12,500 acres. It is estimated that 750 structures are threatened by the wildfire and over 5,000 people have been evacuated from their homes.

The Colorado Disaster Emergency Act defines a disaster as “the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damages, 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). The Mason Fire poses an imminent danger to life and property and, therefore, I find that it constitutes a state disaster emergency.

In response, I have encumbered state funds and directed the use of state resources to contain and extinguish this wildfire in the shortest possible timeframe. I have directed the Colorado State Forest Service and its wildfire experts to provide assistance in combating this fire. In addition, the state has made Single Engine Air Tankers, National Guard Helicopters, ground vehicles, and fire crews available to assist in this effort. The State of Colorado will use every resource at its disposal when the life or property of its citizens is at risk.

2. Mission and Scope.

- A. I hereby declare that the Mason Fire constitutes a disaster for purposes of C.R.S. §24-32-2103.
- B. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-32-2106, I order the encumbrance of \$2 million from the State Disaster Emergency Fund to finance fire suppression activities. These funds shall remain available for this purpose for nine months from the date of this Executive Order.
- C. The Director of the Colorado Office of Emergency Management and the Colorado State Forest Service is hereby authorized and directed to coordinate application to the federal government for funds available to individuals affected by this disaster, federal funds available for reimbursement, and for any other funds available related to this disaster emergency.
- D. All verbal orders made by the Governor and issued in regard to this disaster emergency are hereby memorialized by this Executive Order and shall have the full force and effect of law as if they were contained within this Executive Order.

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 14<sup>th</sup>  
day of July, 2005.

Bill Owens  
Governor