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EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to a Large Wildfire in Montezuma County 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 in particular vested in the Governor as commander in chief of state military forces under § 28-3-104, C.R.S., and pursuant to 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 and ordering to state active duty part of the Colorado National Guard.

1. Background and Need.

On July 20, 2000, a wildfire began in Montezuma County (“the Bircher Fire”) that consumed a substantial amount of private land before being driven into the Mesa Verde National Park by wind. This fire as of the date of this Executive Order, is not contained, has destroyed over 22,000 acres and continues to imminently threaten severe damage to and loss of property. The Bircher Fire constitutes a disaster for purposes of § 24-32-2103, C.R.S.

As evidenced by Resolution 9-2000 adopted by the Montezuma County Board of County Commissioners requesting state emergency assistance, this disaster will require the combined efforts of the state and local governments, the private and not-profit sectors, and the public. Due to the unpredictable winds, the extremely dry conditions in the area and the need for additional resources to respond to the fire, extraordinary measures are necessary to protect the public health and ensure public safety and welfare.

Accordingly, I hereby declare that a state of disaster emergency has existed since July 25, 2000 due to the Bircher Fire, and acknowledge my earlier verbal order to activate the State of Colorado Emergency Operations Plan and certain elements of the Colorado National Guard to assist in the wildfire containment efforts.

2. Mission and Scope.

This Executive Order orders the following:

- A. The State activation of elements of the Colorado National Guard as may be determined from time to time by the Colorado Office of Emergency Management;
- B. The expenditure of funds from the State Disaster Emergency Fund and the transfer of unexpected surplus from all state departments and agencies as required to meet emergency needs;
- C. The authorization of all state departments and agencies to take whatever actions are required and requested by the Colorado Office of Emergency Management, within the Colorado State Emergency Operations Plan, to meet the emergency needs;
- D. All funds currently held in the State Disaster Emergency Fund shall remain within that fund beyond the termination of the state fiscal year on June 30, 2000, and shall remain within that fund until expended or until further Executive Order;
- E. The Director of the Colorado Office of Emergency Management is hereby authorized and directed to coordinate application to the federal government and elsewhere as appropriate for funding related to the disaster emergency;
- F. All previous and future verbal orders, until memorialized in a written order amending this Executive Order, which I may make in reference to this state disaster emergency shall have the full force and effect as if they were contained within this Executive Order.

3. Duration.

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

GIVEN under my hand and
the Executive Seal of the
State of Colorado this 26th
day of July, 2000.

Bill Owens
Governor