

STATE OF COLORADO

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

D 2016-001

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to the Rock Landslide on U.S. Highway 70

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Office of the Governor of the State of Colorado, and in particular pursuant to the relevant portions of C.R.S. § 28-3-104 and 24-33.5-701, *et seq.*, I, John W. Hickenlooper, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order declaring a disaster emergency due to the recent rockslides on U.S. Highway 70 in Glenwood Canyon.

I. Background and Purpose

The Governor is responsible for addressing the dangers to the State and people presented by disasters. The Colorado Disaster Emergency Act defines a disaster 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...” C.R.S § 24-33.5-703(3).

On February 15, 2016 a large rockslide occurred at Mile Marker 124.2 (directly west of Hanging Lake Tunnel and eight miles east of Glenwood Springs) of U.S. Highway 70, causing extensive damage. A second slide in the same location occurred shortly thereafter. Both eastbound and westbound U.S. Highway 70 suffered significant damage.

As a result of the rockslide and associated roadway damage, and out of a concern for the safety of the traveling public, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) closed U.S. Highway 70 in both directions through Glenwood Canyon. CDOT crews immediately began rock scaling operations in the area of the rockslide to reduce risk. These operations continued from February 16-20, 2016.

Rockslide crews continue efforts to stabilize the slope. Rockslide mitigation fencing will be installed on top of the westbound barrier walls. Crews will also be working to remove the damaged wall and guardrail in the westbound lanes. Repair efforts cannot begin, however, until crews stabilize the slope, remove debris, and complete a full damage assessment. Repairs are expected to continue for several weeks.

U.S. Highway 70 is used in this area by over 16,000 vehicles per day. The closure of U.S. Highway 70 requires the use of one of two alternate routes, one north and one south of U.S. Highway 70. The northern detour adds 146 miles and about three hours to a regular trip from Wolcott to Rifle on U.S. Highway 70. The southern detour adds 145 miles and 3.5 hours to the same trip.

Initial rock scaling and slope stabilization is estimated to cost approximately \$880,000.00. Repairs to the roadway and structures are estimated to cost approximately \$3.74 million.

II. Declaration and Directives

- A. The severe rockslide and associated infrastructure damage constitutes a disaster emergency under C.R.S § 24-33.5-701, *et. seq.* The Governor's verbal order of February 16, 2016 declaring a disaster emergency is hereby memorialized by this Executive Order and shall have the full force and effect of law as if it were contained within this Executive Order.
- B. Pursuant to sections 125 and 120(e) of Title 23 of the United States Code, I hereby find the damage to U.S. Highway 70 at Mile Marker 124.2 as a result of the severe rockslide constitutes an emergency. The immediate repair and reconstruction of the damaged highway is vital to the security, well-being, and health of the citizens of the State of Colorado. This declaration shall permit the Colorado Department of Transportation to pursue federal transportation emergency relief funds, as is provided under the United States Code. Furthermore, I respectfully request that the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Division Administrator concur in the declaration of this emergency for the purposes of securing FHWA Emergency Relief Program funds.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire 30 days from February 15, 2016, unless extended further by Executive Order.



GIVEN under my hand and the
Executive Seal of the State of
Colorado this 2nd day of
March, 2016.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John W. Hickenlooper".

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor