

# STATE OF COLORADO

## OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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John W. Hickenlooper  
Governor

**D 2017-020**

## **EXECUTIVE ORDER**

### **Authorizing deployment of the Colorado National Guard in support of impacts and events relating to the 2017 Solar Eclipse**

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to the Colorado Constitution, Article IV, Section 2, and pursuant to the relevant portions of the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act, C.R.S § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.*, I, John W. Hickenlooper, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order declaring a state of disaster emergency due to the anticipated impacts and events in Colorado related to the 2017 Solar Eclipse in northern Colorado. Further, pursuant to the Colorado Constitution, Article IV, Section 5, and pursuant to C.R.S. § 28-3-104, I also hereby authorize Colorado National Guard air resources to respond to impacts and events relating to the 2017 Solar Eclipse in northern Colorado.

#### **I. Background and Purpose**

The Governor is responsible for meeting 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 Monday, August 21, 2017, a solar eclipse occurred with the path of totality crossing the nation from west to east, including portions of Wyoming and Nebraska. The event attracted interest across the nation, with an estimated 200 million people living within a one-day drive of the path of totality. A substantial number of people from Colorado made the journey to neighboring states, leading to traffic congestion, vehicle crashes, additional need for law enforcement and emergency medical services personnel and other associated impacts.

In the week prior to the 2017 Solar Eclipse, the Colorado Department of Transportation as well as other experts in the transportation arena predicted that the eclipse traffic could be the most significant traffic event of the year. There was significant concern that this would be a major traffic event - both from the heavy traffic volume as well as disruptions due to the eclipse. Experts predicted that up to 600,000 additional people would travel to Wyoming to view the eclipse. The Department of Transportation predicted that up to 400,000 additional people could be on Colorado roadways over the weekend and Monday August 21st. On August 18, 2017, the Colorado Department of Transportation warned drivers to be ready for an 8-12 hour wait to return home after the eclipse. In addition, the State Emergency Operations Center expected the traffic to overwhelm the response capabilities of local governments and private sector entities.

Due to the information and projections of significant traffic and delays leaving motorists on our highways for 8-12 hours and in anticipation of the potential impacts resulting from this, on August 18, 2017, I verbally declared a disaster emergency for responding to impacts related to the 2017 Solar Eclipse, and activated the State of Colorado Hazard and Incident Response and Recovery Plan, also known as the State Emergency Operations Plan. The State Emergency Operations Center began final preparations August 18, 2017 to support local and state agency emergency needs, and activated them August 20-21, 2017 to closely monitor conditions and provide for rapid response to local and state agency assistance requests. Of particular concern were anticipated requests for emergency medical evacuation of sick and injured patients that would require helicopter evacuation due to congested roadways in remote areas.

Further, I authorized pre-positioning of Colorado National Guard air resources for impacts and events related to the 2017 Solar Eclipse in northern Colorado, including helicopter medical emergency transportation and wildland fire suppression. Colorado National Guard air resources were placed on standby beginning August 21, 2017, at 10:00 a.m. and continued until 5:00 p.m., and the State Emergency Operations Center provided staff to allow state agencies to organize responsive activities. The State provided direct assistance to local law enforcement through the Colorado State Patrol, the State Emergency Operations Center, and the Department of Transportation. The National Guard remained on standby, but their assistance was not ultimately necessary.

## II. Declarations and Directives

- A. The 2017 Solar Eclipse and associated impacts constitute a disaster emergency under C.R.S § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.* My verbal order of August 18, 2017 declaring a disaster emergency to prepare for and respond to impacts of the 2017 Solar Eclipse is hereby memorialized by this Executive Order and shall have the full force and effect of law as if it were contained within this order.

- B. The State of Colorado Hazard and Incident Response and Recovery Plan, also known as the State Emergency Operations Plan, is hereby activated. All State departments and agencies shall take whatever actions may be required and requested by the Director or Acting Director of the Office of Emergency Management pursuant to the Emergency Support Function 5 Annex of the Colorado Hazard and Incident Response and Recovery Plan, including provision of appropriate staff and equipment as necessary.
- C. Due to the current insufficiency of funds necessary to pay for responding to impacts related to the 2017 Solar Eclipse in the Disaster Emergency Fund, I order the transfer of \$30,000 from the Controlled Maintenance Trust Fund into the Disaster Emergency Fund pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-706(4)(b). I further encumber \$30,000 in the Disaster Emergency Fund to pay for responding to the impacts related to the 2017 Solar Eclipse, including preparations and activating the State Emergency Operations Center since August 18, 2017, and placing Colorado National Guard personnel on standby August 21, 2017.
- D. My verbal orders of August 18, 2017, activating the Colorado National Guard and authorizing the use of Colorado National Guard aviation assets for 2017 Solar Eclipse missions are hereby memorialized by this Executive Order and shall have the full force and effect of law as if they were contained within this order.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty days from August 18, 2017, unless extended further by Executive Order, except that the funds described in paragraph II(c) above shall remain available for the described purposes for sixty (60) months from the date of this Executive Order.



GIVEN under my hand and the  
Executive Seal of the State of  
Colorado this eleventh day of  
September, 2017.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John W. Hickenlooper".

John W. Hickenlooper  
Governor