

STATE OF COLORADO

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John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

D 2018 025

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to the Rock Landslide on U.S. Highway 550

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Colorado Constitution and 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 recent rock landslide on U.S. Highway 550 (the "U.S. Highway 550 Landslide").

I. Background and Purpose

The Governor is responsible for meeting the dangers to the State and people presented by disasters, C.R.S. § 24-33.5-704(1). 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. including but not limited to . . . flood[.]" C.R.S. § 24-33.5-703(3).

On July 8, 2018, a slow intense summer thunderstorm settled over the U.S. Highway 550 corridor south of Ouray, Colorado near Red Mountain Pass. This event was significant enough that it washed rock, debris, and mud down onto U.S. Highway 550 in several locations, including the Ruby Walls rockfall area ("Ruby Walls"). The debris event, particularly at milepost 89.56 and Ruby Walls, was large enough that it dislodged and destroyed a large retaining wall that supports U.S. Highway 550 and compromised the structural integrity and functionality of the Ruby Walls rockfall fence. The flooding debris ranged from 10-15 feet deep on the inside lanes of the highway and at least four feet high on the outside shoulder of the highway. The loss of the retaining wall caused approximately 10 feet of shoulder to be lost as well as subsequent scour back to the edge of pavement with some undermining of the roadway surface. In addition, the debris flow blocked all lanes of U.S. Highway 550.

The U.S. Highway 550 Landslide closed U.S. Highway 550 between the summit of Red Mountain Pass and Ouray, Colorado for approximately one day in order to assess the damage. In this area, U.S. Highway 550 is used by over 2,200 vehicles per day, of which 10.1 percent are trucks. Use of U.S. Highway 550 is critical in supporting the tourist industry in Ouray and San Juan Counties. Identified detour routes utilizing State Highway 145 via State Highway 62 on the north and U.S. Highway 160 on the south can be implemented if full closures are anticipated. These detours can add up to approximately two additional hours of travel.

Permanent mitigation of the damage caused by the U.S. Highway 550 Landslide is needed to ensure safety of the traveling public on this critical mountain corridor. The initial cost estimate for repair and construction of infrastructure damaged by the U.S. Highway 550 Landslide is approximately \$1.25 million.

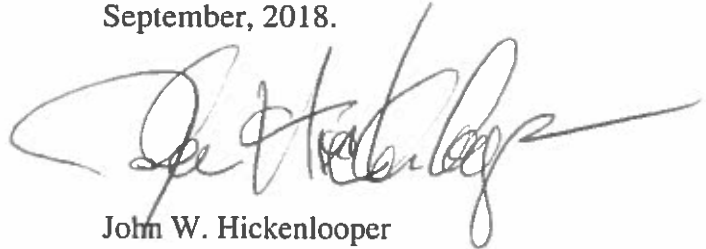
II. Declarations and Directives

- A. The U.S. Highway 550 Landslide constitutes a disaster emergency under C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.*
- B. I hereby find that the U.S. Highway 550 Landslide, including the serious damage caused as a result of U.S. Highway 550 Landslide, constitutes an emergency. The construction of permanent mitigation along this stretch of the highway will ensure safe travel over the pass for local residents and safeguard against future landslide incidents. This declaration shall permit the Colorado Department of Transportation to pursue federal transportation emergency relief funds, as is provided under sections 120 and 125 of Title 23 of the United States Code. Furthermore, the U.S. Federal Highway Administration (“FHWA”) Division Administrator is respectfully requested to concur in the declaration of this emergency for the purposes of securing FHWA Emergency Relief Program Funds.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from September 11, 2018, unless extended further by Executive Order.

GIVEN under my hand and
Executive Seal of the State of
Colorado this eleventh day of
September, 2018.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John W. Hickenlooper", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor