



**COLORADO**

Governor Jared Polis

**D 2019 008**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER**

**Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to the Rockslide on State Highway 145 in Southwest Colorado**

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, Jared Polis, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order declaring a state of disaster emergency due to a rockslide on State Highway 145 (SH 145) in Southwest Colorado on May 24, 2019 (SH 145 Rockslide).

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 . . . .” C.R.S. § 24-33.5-703(3).

On May 24, 2019, two large rocks—one estimated to weigh 2.5 million pounds and the other estimated to weigh 8.5 million pounds—calved off an escarpment and fell approximately 800 feet onto SH 145. One rock created an eight-foot deep trench across the entire width of SH 145. The other rock embedded in the roadway and blocked both lanes of SH 145.

The rocks destroyed a power pole adjacent to SH 145 and left the road impassable. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) closed SH 145 to all traffic, and it remained closed throughout the Memorial Day weekend while CDOT crews blasted and removed the rocks. CDOT’s rockfall mitigation team conducted a site assessment and determined that weather and freeze-thaw cycles may cause additional rockfall risk and mitigation is necessary. CDOT opened one lane on May 26, 2019, to allow the travelling public through the area under controlled conditions.

SH 145 is a primary transportation corridor in southwest Colorado. Two thousand vehicles, nine percent of which are trucks, use SH 145 each day. The route serves tourist traffic, which is critical to Dolores and San Miguel Counties’ economies. SH 145 is also a key linkage for CDOT’s Bustang Outrider, a public transit service in southwest Colorado. CDOT has identified detour routes utilizing U.S. Highway 160 via U.S. Highway 550; however, the detour adds at least three hours of travel time.



Permanent mitigation of the damage caused by the SH 145 Rockslide is required to ensure the safety of the traveling public in this critical mountain corridor. The initial cost estimate for repair and construction of infrastructure damaged by the SH 145 Rockslide is \$1.3 million.

II. Declarations and Directives

In light of the SH 145 Rockslide, I hereby declare the following:

- A. The SH 145 Rockslide, including the damage caused by the SH 145 Rockslide, constitutes a disaster emergency under C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, et seq.
- B. The construction of permanent mitigation along this stretch of the highway will ensure safe travel on SH 145 for local residents and safeguard against future rockfall incidents. This declaration shall permit CDOT 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.
- C. No State Disaster Emergency Funds were authorized or appropriated.
- D. The State Emergency Operations Plan was not activated.
- E. Emergency procurement procedures are not authorized and this order does not grant a waiver to State of Colorado Fiscal Rule 3-1 (3.2.1) unless otherwise requested.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from June 4, 2019, unless extended further by Executive Order.



GIVEN under my hand and the Executive Seal of the State of Colorado, this fourth day of June, 2019.

Jared Polis  
Governor

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Jared Polis", written over the printed name.