



**COLORADO**

Governor Jared Polis

**D 2019 009**

**EXECUTIVE ORDER**

**Amending Executive Order D 2019 005 to Extend the Declaration of Disaster Emergency Due to Avalanche Debris and Flooding Risk in Hinsdale County**

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 amending Executive Order D 2019 005 to extend the declaration of a state of disaster emergency due to avalanche debris and flooding risk in Hinsdale County, enabling the continuance of State agency assistance to coordinate response, recovery, and mitigation efforts, and making resources available to State agencies for response, recovery, and mitigation activities.

**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).

In February and March 2019, Hinsdale County experienced numerous avalanches that created debris fields in drainages. The debris included soil, rocks, and trees. In April 2019, local officials discovered several debris fields along and within Henson Creek, which contains two historic dams that are both over 100 years old. Both dams are no longer in use and have been partially breached to allow water to flow through them. However, local, state, and federal officials are concerned that the large volume of debris may plug the partial breaches in the two dams, causing them to hold water until they catastrophically fail. A catastrophic dam failure could result in floodwater reaching Lake City within ten to fifteen minutes.

The Director of the Office of Emergency Management activated the State Emergency Operations Center to support and coordinate the efforts of state, local, and private entities in mitigating the risk of dam failure and preparing for response activities if mitigation efforts are insufficient. The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management Regional Field Manager is providing direct local support.

At 9:34 AM on May 6, 2019, I verbally declared a disaster emergency for the avalanche debris and flooding risk in Hinsdale County and activated the State of Colorado Hazard and Incident Response and Recovery Plan (“State Emergency Operations Plan”). I authorized State agency assistance and provided funding for response, recovery, and mitigation efforts in Executive Order D 2019 005.



Due to historic snowpack and ongoing snowmelt in the affected area, the potential threat of severe flooding in Hinsdale County continues. State and local efforts are ongoing to remove debris in Henson Creek and to remove the Hidden Treasure Dam, one of the two impacted historic dams. State and local authorities need additional time to complete debris management and ensure the area is safe for the public. This Executive Order therefore extends Executive Order D 2019 005 to continue effective response, recovery, and mitigation activities.

II. Amendment

Section III of Executive Order D 2019 005 is amended to read as follows:

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from June 5, 2019, unless extended further by Executive Order, except that the funds described in Section II(C) above shall remain available for the described purposes for sixty (60) months from the date of this Executive Order.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall remain in effect until rescinded or modified by Executive Order. In all other respects, Executive Order D 2019 005 shall remain in full force and effect.



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

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be "Jared Polis".

Jared Polis  
Governor