



D 2022 024

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to the High Park Fire in Teller 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 declaring a state of disaster emergency due to the High Park Fire in Teller County enabling State agencies to coordinate for fire suppression, response, consequence management, and recovery efforts.

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 fire.” C.R.S § 24-33.5-703(3).

The High Park Fire started on May 12, 2022 in Teller County on private land west of Cripple Creek, Colorado. Due to high winds and dry conditions, the High Park Fire quickly grew to 846 acres, immediately threatening 42 homes, and prompting the evacuation of 120 people. At approximately 7:45 P.M. on May 12, 2022, the Division of Fire Prevention and Control determined that the High Park Fire had exceeded Teller County’s capability and was eligible for state responsibility per the Emergency Fire Fund criteria. At that time, the Emergency Fire Fund had sufficient funds to cover the estimated suppression costs associated with the High Park Fire.

On May 13, 2022, at approximately 8:38 PM, I verbally declared a disaster emergency for the High Park Fire in Teller County and activated the State Emergency Operations Plan. This declaration was necessary because the High Park Fire continued to grow and estimated suppression and consequence management costs exceeded the available funds in the Emergency Fire Fund.

As of May 23, 2022, the High Park Fire burned 1,572 acres and was 100% contained.

II. Declarations and Directives

- A. The High Park Fire and associated impacts constitute a disaster emergency under C.R.S § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.* My verbal order of May 13, 2022, 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. 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 State Emergency Operations Plan, including provision of appropriate staff and equipment as necessary.
- C. Funds in the Emergency Fire Fund are hereby found to be insufficient to pay for the State fire suppression, response, consequence management, and recovery efforts related to the High Park Fire. Further, pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-706(4)(b), funds in the Disaster Emergency Fund (DEF) are hereby found insufficient to pay for fire suppression, response, consequence management, and recovery efforts related to the High Park Fire. Therefore, I order that one million eight hundred thirty five thousand dollars (\$1,835,000) be transferred from the State Emergency Reserve Cash Fund (SER) to the DEF. I encumber one million eight hundred thirty five thousand dollars (\$1,835,000) in the DEF, established in C.R.S. § 24-33.5-706(2)(a), for costs associated with the State's fire suppression, response, consequence management, and recovery efforts related to the High Park Fire.
- D. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-705.4(5), the Director of the Office of Emergency Management is hereby authorized and directed to allocate the funding to the appropriate government agencies and non-profit organizations and execute awards, purchase orders, or other mechanisms to effect the allocation of the funds. The funds described in Section II(C) above shall remain available for this purpose until thirty-six (36) months from the date of this Executive Order, and any unexpended funds shall remain in the DEF.
- E. The Division of Fire Prevention and Control, via its fire billing practices, is authorized to coordinate application for any funds available related to this disaster emergency. Specifically, the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control is directed to seek reimbursement and make payments as needed to agencies providing assistance on this incident.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from May 13, 2022, unless extended further by Executive Order, except that the funds described in Section II(C) above shall remain available for the described purposes for thirty-six (36) months from the date of this Executive Order.



GIVEN under my hand and
the Executive Seal of the
State of Colorado, this eighth
day of June 2022.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jared Polis'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jared Polis
Governor