



D 2023 020

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Directing the Colorado Department of Natural Resources to Develop a Plan for Continued Operations and Resource Protection of Colorado's National Parks and Other Federal Lands in the Event of a Federal Government Shutdown

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, I, Jared Polis, Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order directing the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to develop a plan for continued operations and resource protection of Colorado's national parks and other federal lands in the event of any federal government shutdown.

I. Background and Purpose

Colorado is home to four national parks: Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park, Great Sand Dunes National Park, Mesa Verde National Park, and Rocky Mountain National Park. Our historic sites, preserve, recreation areas, and monuments (collectively, "federal lands") and national parks are points of pride for all Coloradans as they provide beautiful settings for recreation and relaxation and support tens of thousands of jobs. Over 5.5 million visitors visited Colorado's national parks in 2022, with visitors spending over \$695 million in total and \$1 billion in economic output in the Colorado economy. Collectively, 7.4 million visitors to Colorado's national parks and federal lands contributed \$804 million to our local economy and \$1.3 billion in economic output in the last year.

Congress is currently negotiating to fund the government past September 30, 2023, however, a federal government shutdown remains very likely. A shutdown would have vast implications across the country and Colorado, including the potential closure of our treasured national parks and federal lands. The 2013 federal government shutdown and closure of national parks resulted in 7.88 million fewer visits to America's national parks with a nationwide loss of \$414 million in revenue during the 16-day shutdown. In 2018 and 2019, the government shutdown suddenly left some national parks without access to restrooms, trash removal and road maintenance. With proper planning and state resources, our State can help address needs like these in the future.

Closure of our national parks and federal lands would adversely impact Colorado communities, businesses, workers, and the outdoor recreation economy, which rely on tourist and visitor traffic. In 2022, Dinosaur National Monument alone generated more than \$20 million in economic benefit. Absent last-minute action from Congress, a federal government shutdown

will begin at 12:01 a.m. on October 1, 2023, potentially impacting Coloradans across the State. My administration is committed to examining all potential avenues to keep our national parks and federal lands open and maintained in the event of a federal government shutdown.

II. Directives

- A. I direct DNR to work with Colorado Parks and Wildlife to develop a plan for continued operations and resource protection of Colorado's national parks and federal lands, prioritizing continuation of services based on the number of annual visitors, in the event of a federal government shutdown. This plan should address the immediate threat of a federal government shutdown as well as the real possibility of future shutdowns.
- B. DNR shall work with the Office of State Planning and Budgeting to identify any potential funding needed for continued operations and resource protection of Colorado's four national parks and federal lands, and identify potential sources of State funding for this purpose.
- C. DNR may, to the extent possible, consult with the Department of Interior and the National Park Service, to develop the plan.
- D. DNR shall submit the plan to the Governor's Office as soon as practicable.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall remain in effect unless modified or rescinded by future Executive Order of the Governor.



GIVEN under my hand and the
Executive Seal of the State of
Colorado, this twenty-eighth day
Of September, 2023.

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

Jared Polis
Governor