



## D 2024 014

### EXECUTIVE ORDER

#### **Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to Flooding and Debris Flow in Ouray 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, issue this Executive Order declaring a state of disaster emergency due to the Flooding and Debris Flow in Ouray County, enabling State agencies to coordinate response, consequence management, mitigation, 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.” C.R.S. § 24-33.5-703(3).

Beginning August 5, 2024, rain from a monsoonal weather system caused flash flooding, landslides, and debris flows in Ouray County. The county issued a local disaster declaration on August 13, 2024. The Town of Ridgway and City of Ouray issued local disaster declarations on August 14, 2024.

Numerous roads became damaged and impassable including County Road 17 (CR17), County Road 5 (CR5) and County Road 23 (CR23). CR17 is completely closed due to debris flow at Corbett Creek. County Roads 5 and 23 were washed out and impassable, but are now open.

The Town of Ridgway experienced the most significant impacts. Debris flows rerouted Beaver Creek, destroying the town’s drinking water collection system. A secondary source of drinking water is unreliable. Disruption of the secondary source will cause water restrictions. Along with Beaver Creek being rerouted, the creek banks have become unstable, with exposed tree root systems in many places along the now-widened banks. Roads and a geothermal water pipe are also impacted.

On August 23, 2024, at approximately 1:45 PM, I verbally declared a disaster emergency due to the Flooding and Debris Flow in Ouray County and activated the State Emergency Operations Plan.

## **II. Declarations and Directives**

- A. The Flooding and Debris Flow in Ouray County and associated impacts constitute a disaster emergency under C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.* My verbal order of August 23, 2024, 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. My verbal order of August 23, 2024, activated the State Emergency Operations Plan. All State departments and agencies are authorized to take whatever actions may be required and requested by the Director or Acting Director of the Office of Emergency Management, pursuant to the State Emergency Operations Plan, including provision of appropriate staff and equipment, as necessary.
- C. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-706(4)(b), funds in the Disaster Emergency Fund (DEF) are insufficient to pay for response, consequence management, mitigation, and recovery efforts related to the Flooding and Debris Flow in Ouray County. Therefore, I order that four million nine hundred thousand dollars (\$4,900,000) be transferred from the State Emergency Reserve Cash Fund (SERCF) to the DEF. I encumber four million nine hundred thousand dollars (\$4,900,000) in the DEF to pay for response, consequence management, mitigation, and recovery efforts related to the Flooding and Debris Flow in Ouray County.
- 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 funds. The funds described in Section II(C) above shall remain available for this purpose until seventy-two (72) months from the date of this Executive Order, and any unexpended funds shall remain in the DEF.

**III. Duration**

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from August 23, 2024, unless extended further by Executive Order, except that the funds described in Section II(C) above shall remain available for the described purposes for seventy-two (72) months from the date of this Executive Order.



GIVEN under my hand and the  
Executive Seal of the State of  
Colorado this twentieth day of September,  
2024.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jared Polis".

Jared Polis  
Governor