



D 2024 018

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to the Extreme Winter Storm Throughout Colorado and Authorizing Deployment of the Colorado National Guard

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 extreme winter storm throughout Colorado, enabling State agencies to coordinate response, consequence management, hazard mitigation, and recovery efforts.

Further, pursuant to Article IV, Section 5 of the Colorado Constitution and pursuant to C.R.S. § 28-3-104, I hereby authorize deploying the Colorado National Guard in an unarmed capacity for the purpose of responding to and providing support during the extreme winter storm throughout Colorado.

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 November 6, 2024, portions of Colorado, including Las Animas, Elbert, Huerfano, El Paso, Otero, and Lincoln Counties, began receiving unprecedented amounts of snow, which accumulated 18-37 inches throughout the day, with an additional 2-7 inches expected overnight. The National Weather Service predicted an additional 12-36 inches of snow accumulation to fall in the region beginning November 8, 2024 and continuing through November 9, 2024. With these dangerous conditions, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, people with special medical needs, and unhoused individuals are especially vulnerable.

At approximately 12:00 PM on November 6, 2024, Colorado State Patrol (CSP) mobilized high clearance vehicles and other resources to rescue and transport stranded motorists to warming shelters throughout the southern region of the State. As of 1:30 PM, CSP and Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC) personnel executed multiple recovery missions for stranded motorists. With the continued snow fall, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) closed Interstate 25 south of Pueblo and Interstate 70 east of Limon, causing travelers to

use alternate routes to bypass the closures and navigate unsafe and unplowed state highways and county roads. The snowstorm stranded numerous motorists throughout the region and created conditions stressing local jurisdictions' resources.

On November 7, 2024, at approximately 3:15 PM, I verbally declared a disaster emergency for the extreme winter storm impacts throughout Colorado, and activated the State Emergency Operations Plan and directed the Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to take all necessary and appropriate State actions to assist the affected jurisdictions with their response, consequence management, hazard mitigation, and recovery efforts. At the same time, I verbally authorized deployment and use of the Colorado National Guard in an unarmed capacity for the purpose of response, consequence management, hazard mitigation, and recovery efforts related to the extreme winter storm throughout the State.

II. Declarations and Directives

- A. The extreme winter storm and associated impacts constitute a disaster emergency under C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.* My verbal order of November 7, 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. Further, pursuant to C.R.S. § 28-3-104, my verbal order of November 7, 2024, authorizing deployment and use of the Colorado National Guard in an unarmed capacity for the purpose of response, consequence management, hazard mitigation, and recovery efforts related to the extreme winter storm response, 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.
- C. My verbal order of November 7, 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 his delegate of the OEM pursuant to the State Emergency Operations Plan, including provision of appropriate staff and equipment, as necessary.
- D. 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, hazard mitigation, and recovery efforts related to the extreme winter storm. Therefore, I order that two hundred forty five thousand dollars (\$245,000) be transferred from the State Emergency Reserve Cash Fund (SERCF) to the DEF. I encumber two hundred forty five thousand dollars (\$245,000) in the DEF to pay for response,

consequence management, hazard mitigation, and recovery efforts related to the extreme winter storm throughout Colorado.

- E. 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(D) above shall remain available for this purpose until seventy-two (72) months from the date of this order, and any unexpended funds shall remain in the DEF.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from November 7, 2024, unless extended further by Executive Order, except that the funds described in Section II(D) 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 sixth
day of December, 2024.

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

Jared Polis
Governor