



COLORADO

Governor Jared Polis

D 2019 003

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to Severe Winter Weather and Blizzard Conditions in Hinsdale, Elbert, Douglas, and El Paso Counties, 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 the severe winter weather and blizzard conditions in Hinsdale, Elbert, Douglas, and El Paso Counties (“Hinsdale, Elbert, Douglas, and El Paso Counties Severe Winter Weather and Blizzard Conditions”), enabling State agencies to coordinate response, recovery, and mitigation efforts, and making resources available to State agencies for response, recovery, and mitigation activities.

Further, pursuant to the Colorado Constitution, Article IV, Section 5, and pursuant to C.R.S. § 28-3-104, I also hereby authorize deploying the Colorado National Guard for the purpose of responding to the Hinsdale, Elbert, Douglas, and El Paso Counties Severe Winter Weather and Blizzard Conditions.

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 March 13, 2019, an extremely powerful low pressure system developed over southern Colorado, likely setting a record for the lowest barometric pressure recorded in Colorado. The storm brought widespread rainfall to the plains followed by blizzard conditions over the northeast quadrant of the State, and dropped several feet of snow over the mountains. Blowing snow, low visibility, and hazardous travel continued into March 14, 2019. The National Weather Service reported wind gusts between 60 and 95 miles per hour.



The storm system stranded vehicles and people across the impacted areas, particularly in Elbert, Douglas, and El Paso counties. First responders were overwhelmed by the storm's impacts.

In Hinsdale County, extreme avalanche danger forced several evacuations. An avalanche destroyed one home, owned by the Hinsdale County Sheriff, and injured three people.

The State Emergency Operations Center supported and coordinated search and rescue activities and other requests from impacted jurisdictions. Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management ("Division") Regional Field Managers supported local response efforts, and the Division's Public Information Officer was deployed to Hinsdale County to supplement public information needs.

At approximately 2:30 p.m. on March 13, 2019, I verbally declared a disaster emergency for Hinsdale, Elbert, Douglas, and El Paso Counties and activated the State of Colorado Hazard and Incident Response and Recovery Plan (the "Plan").

I further verbally authorized deployment and use of the Colorado National Guard for the purpose of responding to the Hinsdale, Elbert, Douglas, and El Paso Counties Severe Winter Weather and Blizzard Conditions.

II. Declarations and Directives

- A. The Hinsdale, Elbert, Douglas, and El Paso Counties Severe Winter Weather and Blizzard Conditions and associated impacts constitute a disaster emergency under C.R.S. § 24-33.5-701, *et seq.* My verbal order of March 13, 2019, 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 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 Plan, including provision of appropriate staff and equipment as necessary.
- C. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-33.5-706(4), I find that the funds regularly appropriated to State and local agencies are insufficient to address this disaster emergency. Therefore, I order that two hundred thousand dollars (\$200,000) from the State Disaster Emergency Fund is encumbered to pay for the State-level response, recovery, and mitigation efforts related to this disaster emergency. This amount is currently available in the Disaster Emergency Fund.

- D. Further, 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. These funds shall remain available for this purpose until sixty (60) months from the date of this Executive Order, and any unexpended funds shall remain in the Disaster Emergency Fund.

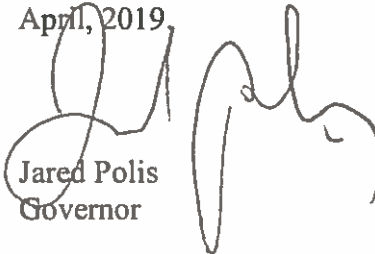
- E. Further, pursuant to C.R.S. § 28-3-104, my verbal orders of March 13, 2019, activating the National Guard and authorizing use of National Guard assets for life safety missions associated with the Hinsdale, Elbert, Douglas, and El Paso Counties Severe Winter Weather and Blizzard Conditions are hereby memorialized by this Executive Order, and shall have the full force and effect of law as if they were contained within this Executive Order.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty (30) days from March 13, 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.



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


Jared Polis
Governor