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EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to a Sudden Snowstorm

Pursuant to the authority vested in the Governor of the State of Colorado and, in particular, pursuant to relevant portions of the Colorado Disaster Emergency Act of 1992, C.R.S. § 24-32-2100 *et seq.*, I, Bill Ritter, Jr., Governor of the State of Colorado, hereby issue this Executive Order declaring a state of disaster emergency in El Paso County, Colorado due to a sudden, late-season snowstorm.

1. Background and Need

On Tuesday, April 24, 2007, a snowstorm struck El Paso County, dropping more than 18 inches of snow in many parts of the county and producing snowdrifts in excess of six feet along some highways. The sudden, late-season snowstorm left hundreds of motorists and passengers stranded, including buses transporting children. The snowstorm and its attendant road closures left hundreds in need of rescue and overnight shelter.

As Governor, I am responsible for meeting the dangers to the state and people presented by disasters. The Colorado Disaster Emergency Act of 1992 (hereinafter the "Act"), defines a disaster as "the occurrence or imminent threat of widespread or severe damages, injury or loss of life or property resulting from any natural cause or cause of human origin, including but not limited to... storm." C.R.S. § 24-32-2103(1.5). As evidenced by the hundreds of people stranded, this snowstorm posed an imminent danger to human life and property and, therefore, constituted a disaster for the purposes of the Act.

In response to this disaster, on April 24, 2007, I declared a countywide disaster emergency in El Paso County and activated certain elements of the Colorado National Guard to assist with the disaster emergency response effort. Specifically, I authorized the activation of National Guard troops, and the utilization of state emergency personnel, emergency equipment, and the state's disaster emergency fund.

State emergency equipment and personnel were used to rescue stranded motorists, transport emergency materials to shelters, clear roadways for emergency vehicles and stranded motorists, and respond to individual emergency situations. These efforts were necessary to adequately respond to emergency situations caused by the snowstorm. It is estimated that these state

activities cost approximately \$7,000.

2. Mission and Scope

- A. I hereby declare that this snowstorm constituted a disaster for purposes of C.R.S. §24-32-2103, and acknowledge my verbal order of April 24, 2007, declaring a disaster emergency in El Paso County.
- B. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-32-2106, I order the encumbrance of up to \$7,000 from the State Disaster Emergency Fund to pay for this response effort. These funds shall remain available for this purpose for six months from the date of this Executive Order.
- C. The Director of the Colorado Office of Emergency Management is hereby authorized and directed to allocate the funding to the appropriate state agencies for any reimbursable funding related to this disaster emergency.
- D. All verbal orders that I issued regarding this disaster emergency, including my disaster emergency declaration on April 24, 2007, 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.

3. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty days from its date of signature unless extended by Executive Order.

Given under my hand and
the Executive Seal of the
State of Colorado this 27th
day of April, 2007.

Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor