STATE OF COLORADO

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Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor

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EXECUTIVE ORDER

Declaring a Disaster Emergency Due to a Severe Blizzard

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, §§ 24-32-2100, *et seq.*, C.R.S. I, Bill Ritter, Jr., Governor of the State of Colorado, issue this Executive Order declaring a state of disaster emergency due to a severe blizzard.

I. Background and Purpose

Beginning early on the morning of March 26, 2009, a blizzard hit the State and it is predicted to cover much of Colorado before it dissipates. It is predicted that this blizzard will drop between one and two feet of snow in communities along the Front Range and in excess of three feet of snow in the foothills, mountains, and southwest part of the State. Moreover, current high winds and rain turning to snow and ice have impacted traffic safety, including causing the closure of U.S. Highway 36 between Westminster and Boulder. The blizzard has already stranded motorists who are now in need of rescue, and it is expected that this need for emergency assistance will only grow as the full force of the blizzard moves across the State.

As Governor, I am responsible for meeting the dangers to the state and people presented by disasters. The Colorado Disaster Emergency Act (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 detailed in this Order, this snowstorm poses an imminent danger to human life and property and, therefore, constitutes a disaster for the purposes of the Act.

In response to this disaster, I am declaring a statewide disaster emergency and activating certain elements of the Colorado National Guard to assist with the disaster emergency response effort. Specifically, I authorize 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 will be available to rescue stranded motorists, transport emergency materials to locations such as shelters and the airport, clear

roadways for emergency vehicles and stranded motorists, and respond to individual emergency situations. These efforts are necessary to adequately prepare to respond to emergency situations caused by the blizzard.

II. Directives

A. I hereby declare that this blizzard constitutes a disaster emergency for purposes of C.R.S. § 24-32-2103.

B. The State Emergency Operations Plan ("Plan") is hereby activated. All State departments and agencies shall take whatever actions may be required and requested by the Director of the Division of Emergency Management, including provision of appropriate staff and equipment as necessary.

C. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-32-2104(6) and § 28-3-104, as commander-in-chief of military forces, I hereby employ and call to active duty certain elements of the Colorado National Guard as may be necessary to respond to this disaster, and delegate command authority to the Adjutant General of the Colorado Department of Military. I order the Adjutant General of the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Director of the Colorado Division of Emergency Management to coordinate activities between their respective department and division as necessary to respond to this disaster emergency and execute the directives contained in this Executive Order.

D. Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-32-2106, I find that the funds in the Disaster Emergency Fund are insufficient; therefore, pursuant to paragraph (2) of Section 1 of the 2008 Long Bill (House Bill 08-1375) and paragraph (2) of Section 1 of Senate Bill 09-204, I order that $200,000 be transferred from the Major Medical Insurance Fund to the Disaster Emergency Fund. I further order the encumbrance of up to $200,000 from the Disaster Emergency Fund to pay for the response and recovery effort related to this disaster. The Director of the Colorado Division of Emergency Management is hereby authorized and directed to allocate the funding to the appropriate agencies. These funds shall remain available for this purpose for six months from the date of this Executive Order, and any unexpended funds shall remain in the Disaster Emergency Fund.

E. The Director of the Division of Emergency Management is hereby authorized and directed to allocate the funding to the appropriate state agencies and coordinate application to the federal government for any reimbursable funding related to the disaster emergency.

III. Duration

This Executive Order shall expire thirty days from its date of signature unless extended further by Executive Order, except that the funds described in paragraph II(D) above shall remain available for the described purposes for six months from the date of this Executive Order.

GIVEN under my hand and the Executive Seal of the State of Colorado this twenty-sixth day of March, 2009.

Bill Ritter, Jr.
Governor