



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson takes action against New Mexico wildfires

Executive orders declare State of Emergency, activate Black Hawk helicopters

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today took action to free up state money and resources, including Black Hawk helicopters, to help battle wildfires in central and southern New Mexico. The Governor took action after touring both fires - the Lookout Fire near Corona in the Cibola National Forest and Peppin Fire near Capitan in the Lincoln National Forest.

"I'm very concerned about this fire and the speed with which it blew up," Governor Richardson said after assessing the Peppin Fire, which has burned more than 8,000 acres. "I want the state to do everything possible to protect the homes and property in its path. And I want firefighters to have every resource available."

Governor Richardson signed an executive order allowing the New Mexico National Guard to assist local authorities that are fighting the fires. The governor also authorized \$750,000 in state assistance through the Office of Emergency Management.

Governor Richardson also reiterated his concerns about the federal government's decision to ground 33 heavy air tankers that could be used to fight wildfires that are not accessible to ground crews.

“This is the wrong time not to have access to a very important firefighting weapons,” Governor Richardson said of the tankers. “The Administration grounded these tankers without a contingency, which is just a bad decision.

“This fire is a great example of why you can’t fight some wild fires on the ground. The terrain is too rugged and dangerous for fire crews. I urge the Bush Administration to immediately rescind its ban, and consider the safety of firefighters.”

The executive orders signed today by the Governor are attached as word documents. Anyone wanting the orders sent as text files should contact the Governor’s Office at 476-2299.



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Peppin Fire.doc

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