



## **Governor Bill Richardson Takes Action To Protect Communities From Potential Flooding Due To Extreme Spring Runoff Levels**

**Gov signs executive order providing resources to monitor reservoirs, dams, levees and rivers as water levels rise**

For Immediate Release  
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SANTA FE, NM- Governor Bill Richardson today signed an Executive Order declaring an emergency across the state as reservoirs, rivers, and streams fill with the highest spring runoff levels in nearly three decades.

“We’re taking action now to save precious time if and when the potential flooding puts lives and property at risk,” said the Governor. “The wet winter has helped mitigate the drought conditions in New Mexico, but now poses a threat to low-lying communities and agricultural land across the state.”

The Governor’s action makes \$750,000 in state emergency funding available to provide resources to monitor water flow, levees, dams, or other flood control structures, and prepare vulnerable areas for the possibility of flooding.

Above average snowpack in the mountains throughout New Mexico, and above average rainfall in the late winter and early spring have increased the risk of flooding statewide. Some flooding is already occurring in the north. The Costilla area has been engaged in sporadic flood fighting for the past few weeks, and more problems are expected as the runoff increases. Information from the Corp of Engineers and the Interstate Stream Commission is that the Rio Grande through Albuquerque could flow at a rate of 7,000 cubic feet per second; a level not seen since the late 1970’s.

Under the order, the State Emergency Operations Center will be activated to Level 3, a low impact monitoring level, where assigned state emergency management and response personnel will coordinate efforts with cities, counties, tribes and pueblos throughout the State as well as other State and Federal agencies to ensure preparation for any unexpected

events. If there should be any flooding, the response system is prepared and ready. It will also allow for emergency work and the purchase and pre-positioning of sandbags and material to assist responders in any needed flood mitigation and response.

“This is one case where we can anticipate a potential emergency before it happens, and we can take steps now to lessen the impact to the community should a flood develop,” said John Denko, New Mexico Secretary of Public Safety.

The Office of Emergency Management recommends that residents living near rivers, streams or low-lying flood plains take precautions now. These include but are not limited to family planning for evacuation and communication. Families should plan for what they would need for a short term or even an extended time away from home, essentials like medications and insurance papers. They should also do what they can to protect their property from high water.

### **EXECUTIVE ORDER 2005-025**

#### **DECLARING AN EMERGENCY FOR THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO DUE TO FLOODING CONCERNS ASSOCIATED WITH SNOWMELT AND RUNOFF**

**WHEREAS**, greater than normal mountain snow pack combined with spring precipitation and warmer temperatures has led to runoff significantly above seasonal averages;

**WHEREAS**, stream flow levels in arroyos, creeks and tributaries associated with at least four of New Mexico’s major river systems are currently above normal and projected to rise even more in the coming weeks;

**WHEREAS**, dams, reservoirs, and irrigation systems are currently being managed for flood control, and flood monitoring and flood fight operations have already commenced;

**WHEREAS**, areas of concern statewide have been identified and these conditions are expected to last well into the summer months;

**WHEREAS**, runoff is predicted to increase and conditions Statewide are expected to worsen;

**WHEREAS**, all available local and state resources may be insufficient to alleviate this emergency and prevent damage from the results of this situation and potential damage to infrastructure will pose a significant threat to the health and safety of the citizens of, and visitors to, the state as well as to the economic base; and

**WHEREAS**, this situation constitutes an emergency situation with potentially catastrophic consequences that requires extensive coordination with local, tribal, state, and federal organizations;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Bill Richardson, Governor of the State of New Mexico, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Laws of the State of New Mexico do hereby declare a State of Emergency exists Statewide due to existing and potential flooding conditions as a result of runoff from snowmelt and additional precipitation.

**I FURTHER DIRECT** the Department of Finance and Administration to provide emergency financial resources in the amount of \$750,000 to the Department of Public Safety. The Office of Emergency Management of the Department of Public Safety is directed to coordinate all requests for assistance and responses to such requests under the authority of and as determined by the Governor or his Authorized Representative pursuant to and in accordance with Sections 6-7-1 through 6-7-3, NMSA 1978 and to request such aid and assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Army Corp of Engineers, and other relevant federal agencies as may be appropriate.

**I FURTHER DIRECT** the Adjutant General to order into service any elements of the New Mexico National Guard as are or may be needed to provide military support to civil authorities as needed for this emergency. This action is pursuant to and in accordance with Sections 20-1-6 and 20-4-3.A. NMSA 1978. Such emergency assistance will be provided during the period of need at the discretion of the Governor's Authorized Representative.

**I FURTHER DIRECT** all Cabinet Departments and agencies of the State of New Mexico to provide any assistance that may be requested by the Office of Emergency Management of the Department of Public Safety or State Emergency Operations Center under the authority of the Governor's Authorized Representative.

**THIS ORDER** supersedes any other previous orders, proclamations, or directives in conflict. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until such time as the Governor rescinds it.

**ATTEST:  
THIS**

**REBECCA VIGIL-GIRON  
GREAT SECRETARY OF STATE  
MEXICO**

**DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

**25<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2005**

**WITNESS MY HAND AND THE  
SEAL OF THE STATE OF NEW**

**BILL RICHARDSON  
GOVERNOR OF NEW MEXICO**

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