



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

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## **Governor Richardson to Appeal FEMA Denial of Alamogordo Assistance Request**

### *FEMA and State Officials Begin Rio Rancho, Sandoval County Damage Assessment*

(Santa Fe, NM) – Governor Bill Richardson today announced that he will appeal the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) decision to deny New Mexico’s Individual Assistance Request for Federal aid for Alamogordo. The Governor was notified of this decision early this morning in a phone call from William Peterson, Director, FEMA Region 6. Governor Richardson discussed the appeal process with Director Peterson and will seek an appeal today.

The State of New Mexico Office of Emergency Management and FEMA officials conducted a preliminary damage assessment in early July to evaluate the damage in Alamogordo. As many as one hundred six homes were affected in a June 22 storm which caused tons of rock, debris, and mud to demolish concrete culverts sending silt, water, and boulders into homes and streets.

“The people of Alamogordo need and deserve this aid,” said Governor Richardson. “Since our initial request was made, the damages to Alamogordo and Otero County have continued to pile up. Storms on August 6, 16, 18 and 19 have meant that many homes in Alamogordo have been hit two, three and even four times over. I am confident that this additional information will help convince FEMA to reverse their decision.”

Information on the additional damage will be included in the appeal and be signed and sent by the Governor today.

On Monday, the Governor also requested a presidential declaration for the community of Hatch and Dona Ana County. This request is still pending before FEMA.

Statewide, the Office of Emergency Management and FEMA are conducting a joint damage assessment in eighteen counties throughout this week. Once the appropriate threshold is reached, a presidential declaration for Public Assistance can be requested for eligible counties with damage to public infrastructure.

Officials from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and New Mexico Office of Emergency Management traveled to Rio Rancho today to begin a joint damage assessment tour. Federal, state, county, and

city officials met at 8 a.m. today to discuss the process of application and visit flood damaged areas in the city and county.

“This assessment is another necessary step toward getting help to the people of Rio Rancho and Sandoval County,” said Governor Richardson. “I am committed to providing all possible State assistance to New Mexicans who are trying to recover from the recent floods. I will do everything in my power to press for federal assistance as well.”

In addition to Sandoval County, the Governor has declared a disaster in 13 other New Mexico flood-impacted counties to free up millions of dollars in state funds for emergency response and clean up.

The presidential disaster declaration request, if granted, would make qualified counties eligible for reimbursement from the federal government. Costs that could be covered include labor, equipment, materials, and contract work associated with the cleanup and restoration to pre-existing conditions. A presidential declaration is a difficult order to obtain and the timeline for the process is unknown.

Earlier this week, during a tour of the devastated Village of Hatch, Governor Richardson announced that he will release \$15,000 in his federal fiscal relief funds to help 500 displaced Elementary and High School students in Hatch get school supplies. The Governor also announced that the Public School Capital Outlay Council (PSCOC) approved two portables buildings requested by the Hatch school district for the Elementary and High School.

The PSCOC has \$3 million available in emergency funds this year and Governor Richardson has asked the PSCOC to consider using these funds to help schools impacted by the recent flooding. Per the Governor’s request, the PSCOC has approved \$200,000 in emergency funding to help with temporary repairs and to complete the engineering design for overall drainage improvements for Sandia High School.

Governor Richardson has also requested the Small Business Administration issue a disaster declaration for Dona Ana, Valencia, Cibola and Sandoval counties and for Acoma and Laguna Pueblos for low-interest emergency loans for affected home owners.