



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

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Governor

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Governor Richardson to Meet With FEMA Director to Push For Federal Assistance for Alamogordo & Hatch

Federal teams in Alamogordo today to re-evaluate damage after Governor's appeal

(Santa Fe, NM) – Governor Bill Richardson will travel to Washington, DC to meet with David Paulison, Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Governor Richardson will urge Paulison to approve his request for federal assistance for flood damaged areas in Doña Ana County and will appeal in person FEMA's initial denial of aid for Otero County.

“The damage to these New Mexico communities, specifically Alamogordo and Hatch, was catastrophic and the citizens need federal funds to get back on their feet and get things back to normal,” Governor Richardson said. “I will personally plead our case to FEMA, and also urge the Director to help cut the red tape and get an answer for our citizens.”

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. Last week, FEMA denied the Governor's Individual Assistance Request for Federal Aid for Alamogordo. Governor Richardson immediately appealed that decision. Since the 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. It is estimated that clean up cost will approach \$5.2 million.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) evaluators, Small Business Administration (SBA) representatives, and State of New Mexico Office of Emergency Management officials are in Alamogordo today. The joint assessment team will join Alamogordo officials to conduct a joint damage assessment. The team is re-evaluating damage and costs associated with flooding for individual homes and businesses following Governor Richardson's appeal of FEMA's denial of assistance for Alamogordo.

The Office of Emergency Management also requested a visit by the SBA disaster program which makes homeowners with significant flood damage eligible for a “Personal Property Loan” which can provide a homeowner or renter with up to \$40,000 to repair or replace personal property like clothing, furniture, or cars; or eligible applicants can also apply for a “Real Property Loan” of up to \$200,000 to repair or restoration. Eligibility for assistance through this program is based on the SBA disaster declaration program.

“The NM Office of Emergency Management is seeking many possible avenues to assist flood affected homeowners and business owners in NM, the SBA disaster programs are another viable option,” said Tim Manning, New Mexico Director of Homeland Security.

Governor Richardson has also requested federal assistance for the community of Hatch in Dona Ana County. This request is still pending before FEMA. On Friday, August 18th representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) joined State Emergency Management officials in a joint damage assessment tour of the area surveying businesses, homes, and rental properties damaged by the flood.

As many as 402 homes have been affected. The majority of the Village of Hatch was left underwater on August 15 from a breached arroyo sending mud and excessive water through neighborhoods and down the business district. Other communities in Dona Ana County, like Sunland Park and Chaparral Wells, battled flooding in prior weeks.

The Governor has declared a disaster in 14 New Mexico flood-impacted counties to free up millions of dollars in state funds for emergency response and clean up.

The FEMA assistance, which would come in the form of a Presidential disaster declaration, 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.

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.

The Governor travels to Washington today- his meeting with Paulson is scheduled for early tomorrow. He will return to New Mexico early tomorrow afternoon.

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