



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Applauds Presidential Disaster Declaration & FEMA Assistance For Doña Ana County

*Governor in Washington to meet with FEMA director to push
for assistance for Alamogordo/Otero County*

(Santa Fe, NM) – David Paulison, Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), this afternoon notified Governor Bill Richardson that FEMA has approved federal relief funding for Doña Ana County after President Bush officially declared the county a major disaster area. Governor Richardson is traveling to Washington, DC this evening to appeal in person FEMA's denial of aid for Otero County.

“This means relief is on the way for residents who are struggling to take care of their families and businesses and get back on their feet,” said Governor Richardson. “I am grateful the President and FEMA recognize the extensive damage caused by heavy rain and flooding in Hatch and other communities in Southern New Mexico. However, I want the people of Alamogordo and Otero County to know I'll keep fighting to get assistance for them as well.”

The presidential disaster declaration will make all qualified homeowners, business owners, and renters in Dona Ana County eligible for assistance from the federal government. FEMA may be able to provide temporary housing, repair, replacement, and permanent housing construction to qualified households or other housing needs like disaster related medical or dental costs, clothing, household items, tools, cleanup items, damaged vehicles, or other necessary expenses or serious needs as determined by FEMA.

FEMA also granted Public Assistance to the following counties: Valencia, Cibola, Dona Ana, Luna, Otero, Socorro, and Lincoln. Public assistance will cover eligible expenses incurred by cities and counties like labor, equipment, materials, and contract work associated with recent flooding.

In the Village of Hatch, as many as 402 homes have been affected. The majority of the Village 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.

Last week, FEMA denied the Governor's Individual Assistance Request for Federal Aid for Alamogordo. Governor Richardson immediately appealed that decision. 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. 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 were in Alamogordo today. The joint assessment team joined 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 Governor travels to Washington this evening- his meeting with Paulson is scheduled for early tomorrow. He will return to New Mexico early tomorrow afternoon.

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