



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

Bill Richardson
Governor

For Immediate Release
January 13, 2006

Contact: Pahl Shipley
(Santa Fe) 505-476-2202

Governor Bill Richardson Announces Fireworks, Smoking, Campfire and Open-Fire Restrictions Due to Dry Conditions

Restrictions primarily affect eastern New Mexico counties

SANTA FE – New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson and the Forestry Division of the Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department today announced new restrictions on fireworks, smoking, campfire and open-fires. The restrictions will go into effect at **8 a.m. Monday, January 16, 2006** on non-municipal, non-federal and non-tribal lands in Chaves, Colfax, Curry, DeBaca, Eddy, Guadalupe, Harding, Lea, Lincoln, Mora, Quay, Roosevelt, San Miguel and Union Counties. This encompasses state and private lands outside municipal and tribal jurisdictions. The restrictions will remain in effect until rescinded.

“Winter fire restrictions, even in New Mexico, are rare and show just how dangerous the situation is, especially in eastern New Mexico,” said Governor Richardson. “The extreme dry conditions have placed a large part of the state at risk, and we must take every precaution to prevent wildfires.”

ENMRD Secretary Joanna Prukop and State Forester Arthur “Butch” Blazer signed an order for the restrictions due to prolonged low levels of precipitation, high winds and low humidity. Fuel moistures are at levels hazardous for burning and fire danger is high. The restrictions include:

- **Smoking:** Allowed only in designated areas, within structures and in vehicles equipped with ashtrays on paved or surfaced roads.
- **Fireworks:** Prohibited in all state and private wildlands outside city or tribal jurisdictions. Wildland areas include lands covered wholly or in part by timber, brush, grass, grain or other flammable vegetation. Exceptions are allowed for fire department approved public exhibits.
- **Campfires:** Allowed only in developed campgrounds and areas designated in writing by the New Mexico State Parks Division or the landowner (for information, contact park managers or visit www.nmparks.com).

- **Open Burning:** Open fires are restricted. There is an exception for open burning on croplands that are irrigated. Persons conducting burns must notify the local fire department, monitor the burn at all times, secure the burn at the end of the day, and follow state air quality rules and local ordinances.

“Abundant moisture over the past two years has led to the rapid growth of grasses and other fine fuels that are now tinder dry and pose a high fire danger even during the winter,” said State Forester Arthur “Butch” Blazer. “These restrictions should alert people to be especially careful with fire. They are necessary to protect grassland, forests and watersheds from wildland fires.”

For specific information concerning the restrictions, please visit the web at www.nmforestry.com. For more information, please call (505) 476-3326.

#30#