



# State of New Mexico

## *Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

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### **Governor Bill Richardson Gets Answers, Announces Support for National Guard Border Mission**

(Santa Fe, NM) – New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, following extensive talks with top officials with both the Border Patrol and National Guard, today announced his support for the deployment of National Guard troops along New Mexico’s border.

“I had serious questions regarding the specific mission, duration of deployment, and funding for the operation that have now been answered to my satisfaction,” said Governor Richardson. “Much of the confusion and misinformation in this case could have been avoided if the administration had communicated directly with and consulted the Governors of the border states.”

Governor Richardson today spoke directly with Lieutenant General Steven Blum, the head of the National Guard. The General assured Governor Richardson:

- June 1st, 50 members of the New Mexico National Guard will be deployed to the border to handle planning and logistics for the overall Guard operation in the state. In mid-June, those troops will be joined by an additional 100 Guard troops that Governor Richardson had previously directed perform a regular training mission along the border in a similar support effort.
- This will be followed by an additional 50 troops per month through September.
- When this mission is fully operational, the total number of Guard troops that will be stationed along the border in New Mexico is expected to number approximately 200. This is in addition to the 68 troops already on the border who are performing various missions in support of border security.
- Additional Guard troops from other states will be available to augment local troops if necessary.
- These troops will remain under the command and control of the Governor of each state.
- The federal government will cover all of the costs of this mission up-front.
- The deployment is expected to be phased out within two years as the Border Patrol brings new agents on line.

“This is one area where I am still skeptical,” said Governor Richardson. “The administration has a record of not having a clear plan or exit strategy for major operations.”

Governor Richardson also clearly expressed his concerns surrounding the state’s drought and extreme fire danger.

“The Guard must be available to assist in the event of a major fire or other disaster, and I was told that not only would our guard be available, Guard troops from other states would also be available to assist,” said Governor Richardson.

### **New Border Patrol Agents**

Governor Richardson also received an update on the 265 additional Border Patrol Agents that Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff has promised for New Mexico.

Of those 265 agents, 37 have been trained and are already in the field. 88 are training at the Border Patrol Academy in Artesia. 140 remain to be hired, and Governor Richardson was assured the hiring will be completed by the end of September. The Border Patrol told the Governor that they will hire and deploy more than 265 additional agents.

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