

For Immediate Release

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## **Governor Bill Richardson Orders New Mexico Strike Teams to Assist California Firefighters**

SANTA FE- Governor Bill Richardson today directed New Mexico State Forester Arthur “Butch” Blazer to dispatch two strike teams to aid in firefighting efforts currently ongoing in California.

“California requested our help and we’re responding immediately,” said Governor Richardson. “Western states deal with wildfires every year and we are always ready to help each other. This year California has been particularly hard-hit and their crews need a break, and additional manpower.”

The strike teams will include five fire engines and crew each. Engines from Farmington, San Juan County, Santa Fe and Angel Fire, making up Strike Team I, will leave Thursday evening for California, to help battle the hundreds of fires that have burned more than 600,000 acres. A second strike team is expected to leave the state by this weekend. The New Mexico State Forestry Division is coordinating the dispatch of these strike teams.

“The crews currently fighting fires in California have done heroic work to save lives and property and it’s important as a neighboring Western state, that will help them in any way we can,” said New Mexico State Forester Arthur “Butch” Blazer. “Our neighbors helped us during our recent fire season and I’m pleased that we are also able to assist California in its time of need.”

This year, more than 800 fires burned approximately 350,000 acres in New Mexico. Resources from Montana and Idaho were assigned to assist New Mexico State Forestry’s fire suppression efforts.

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