



# State of New Mexico

Michelle Lujan Grisham  
*Governor*

July 22, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
President of the United States of America  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Tony Robinson  
Regional Administrator FEMA Region VI  
Federal Regional Center  
800 N. Loop 288  
Denton, TX 76209-3606

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for issuing a Major Disaster Declaration for the New Mexico Wildfires and Straight-line Winds Event. The federal resources that have flowed into New Mexico following your declaration have been incredibly helpful. However, New Mexico continues expending resources to fight the declared fire, mitigate flood impacts throughout the state including post fire debris flows, and maintain response capability during the ongoing wildfire and monsoon seasons. As you know, New Mexico submitted a request to include flooding impacts in our disaster declaration and extend the duration of our disaster declaration on July 13, 2022. Timely approval of this request is critical to ensuring that New Mexicans continue to have access to the resources needed to recover from these events. I therefore respectfully request that you direct FEMA to grant this extension without delay.

New Mexico is utilizing every available asset to combat the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon fire and post fire flooding. However, the ever-increasing depletion of resources and costs to save lives and protect New Mexicans' homes, property, and heritage as these issues continue exceeds the capability of the state. One of the fires covered under the disaster declaration is the largest fire in New Mexico history, destroying over 900 structures and 341,735 acres. While crews have achieved 93% containment as of this writing, this fire continues to burn. Exacerbating the potential for flooding and post fire debris flows, our monsoon season occurs from June through September on an annual basis. Burn scar areas are particularly susceptible to flooding and debris flows during rainstorms due to their hydrophobic state. The precipitation already experienced this monsoon season occurred statewide and led to flash floods and substantial precipitation events, including in the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon burn scar and the McBride burn scar in Lincoln County. Our

counties and state continue coordinating with multiple stakeholders to mitigate flood and debris flow hazards with the support of the New Mexico National Guard, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under PL84-99 authorities, and voluntary organizations active in disaster (VOAD) operating at mass capacity. Even with USACE PL84-99 post fire mitigation efforts to protect critical infrastructure, regular maintenance of those temporary protective measures is the costly responsibility of local jurisdictions. As this devastation continues, the need for federal resources to respond to and recover from these initial fires intensifies.

In addition, the state continues supporting displaced residents in non-congregate sheltering (NCS), including wrap around services, as a result of the fire, and is awaiting approval of both the extension of NCS and approval of Direct Federal Housing assistance. The fire destroyed cellular, land line, and television systems within the burn scar, severely impacting local emergency notification efforts and requiring placement and maintenance of temporary notification equipment to ensure that the public receives emergency fire and flooding notifications. Several drinking water sources are compromised due to ash and debris from the fire, requiring remediation and replacement of treatment facilities and equipment and resulting in recurring potable water delivery to sustain the impacted population's drinking water needs.

In sum, the communities in impacted areas have been unable to recover from the initial impact of the largest wildfire in New Mexico history. Now these same communities are threatened by worsening monsoon rains with the potential to cause even more catastrophic damages. Based on the severity of the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon fire, the ongoing nature of response and recovery activity, and the fact that the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon fire was caused by U.S. Forest Service prescribed burns, I request that the federal government cover 100 percent of the total eligible costs under FEMA-4652-DR-NM pursuant to 44 C.F.R. § 206.47(d) for the entire disaster period.

If you require additional information related to this correspondence, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration of this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Governor of New Mexico