



# State of New Mexico

*Office of the Governor*

**Bill Richardson**  
*Governor*

**News Release**

For Immediate Release  
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## **Governor Bill Richardson Declares State of Drought in New Mexico**

SANTA FE-Governor Bill Richardson today declared a state of drought in New Mexico, ordering state agencies to implement water-saving strategies and prepare to assist in drought relief efforts across the state.

“New Mexico is suffering through one of the driest winters in more than a century – the driest on record in some parts of the state – so we must move now to do what we can to conserve water and protect our available water resources,” Governor Richardson said. “It’s critical for all New Mexicans and all levels of government in the state to make this an urgent priority.”

The governor instructed the New Mexico State Drought Task Force to prepare recommendations on additional steps that can be taken to conserve water and mitigate the effects of the drought.

“I have instructed all cabinet-level state agencies to take immediate steps to reduce water use and consumption in public facilities,” the governor said. “The state will lead by example as we work together to stretch our water supplies over the anticipated dry summer.”

The governor urged water utilities across the state to implement drought plans and monitor use, setting more advanced drought restrictions as warranted by available supplies and levels of usage.

“We must plan for the future with the possibility that the drought will be with us for some time,” the Governor added.

The governor called upon citizens, businesses, schools, institutions of higher learning, local governments and federal agencies to all redouble their efforts to conserve water.

Earlier this month Governor Richardson declared a state of emergency in New Mexico due to the extreme fire danger caused by the drought. That declaration makes emergency funding available for local communities to implement fire restrictions and take necessary precautions to prevent catastrophic wildfires.

The text of the Executive Order follows:

## **EXECUTIVE ORDER 2006-012**

### **DROUGHT DECLARATION FOR THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO**

**WHEREAS**, New Mexico is currently suffering through one of the driest winters in the last 112 years, and in parts of the state, this is the driest year in recorded history;

**WHEREAS**, New Mexico's rivers and streams are expected to have extremely low flows because of snowpack conditions that are the poorest since 1950;

**WHEREAS**, warm temperatures, lack of snow, dry winds, and abundant fire fuels from the unusually wet 2004-2005 winter have increased the fire danger throughout the state;

**WHEREAS**, the National Weather Service is predicting that dry conditions will continue throughout most of New Mexico;

**WHEREAS**, it will take a considerable amount of precipitation and snow melt runoff to return soil moisture conditions to reasonable levels; and

**WHEREAS**, drought conditions, in the near future, are not likely to abate and may worsen.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Bill Richardson, Governor of the State of New Mexico, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and Laws of the State of New Mexico, do hereby order the following:

1. All executive branch agencies of state government shall apply for and, if eligible and qualified, receive emergency funds to carry out the New Mexico Drought Plan and such other disaster relief as set forth in this Executive Order. Such funds shall be released for use by executive branch agencies only upon approval by the Governor or his authorized representative based on the recommendations of the New Mexico State Drought Task Force.

2. All cabinet-level state agencies shall take immediate steps to reduce water use and consumption at their facilities. These steps shall include posting signs encouraging water conservation, ensuring that irrigation systems work properly and do not waste water, installing low-flow water faucets and fixtures and low water landscaping when conducting repairs or constructing new facilities, if financially feasible, and implementing measures to reuse and recycle water.

3. The New Mexico State Drought Task Force shall prepare recommendations for the Governor's consideration as soon as possible but not later than March 29, 2006, concerning steps that the State may take to conserve water during this period of extreme drought;

**I FURTHER URGE** New Mexico's citizens, businesses, schools, institutions of higher learning, local governments and Federal agencies to implement comprehensive conservation and water saving measures to minimize the adverse impacts of the drought, including:

- a. Limiting outdoor irrigation to early mornings and late evenings to minimize evaporation, ensuring that irrigation systems are working properly and using the minimum amount of water necessary to keep landscapes alive;
- b. Eliminating unnecessary water use such as car washing or spraying driveways and sidewalks;
- c. Installing low flow plumbing, ensuring that laundry and dishwasher loads are full, taking shorter showers, and fixing leaking faucets;
- d. Exercising caution when irrigating and watering livestock;
- e. Complying with state and local fire restrictions;
- f. Lighting fires or recklessly discarding objects that may cause fires, like cigarettes;
- g. Promptly reporting fires;
- h. Adjusting thermostats to reduce energy and water use;
- i. Turning evaporative coolers off during the day; and
- j. Ensuring that evaporative coolers and air conditioners are serviced and working properly.

**I FURTHER URGE** that all water utilities immediately implement their drought plans and carefully monitor water use, moving to more advanced alert stages, as mandated by available water supplies and levels of usage.

**THIS ORDER** supersedes any other previous orders, proclamations, or directives in conflict, except that this order shall not supersede Executive Orders 2006-008 or 2006-009. This Executive Order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect until such time as the Governor rescinds it.

**ATTEST:  
THIS**

**DONE AT THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE**

**\_\_\_\_\_ DAY OF MARCH, 2006**

**REBECCA VIGIL-GIRON  
GREAT SECRETARY OF STATE  
THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO**

**WITNESS MY HAND AND THE  
SEAL OF**

**BILL RICHARDSON  
GOVERNOR OF NEW MEXICO**

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