

STATE OF ALASKA
DECLARATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, beginning in late May 2022, and continuing, unusual hot and dry weather, accompanied by dry lightning, caused multiple wildfires in southwest Alaska threatening communities and necessitating a local, state, and federal fire, emergency management, and mass care response; and

WHEREAS, on May 31, during Red Flag conditions, lightning started the East Fork fire north of St. Mary's on the Yukon River. The fire has grown to become the largest fire in the state at over 125,000 acres and is threatening the communities of St. Mary's, Pitkas Point, Mountain Village, and Pilot Station, all within the Lower Yukon Regional Educational Attendance Area (REAA); and

WHEREAS, on June 9, fire progression near St. Mary's prompted local community and fire officials to recommend voluntary relocation of over 100 elderly, medically-fragile, and vulnerable residents to two shelters in Bethel. Along with the field fire suppression effort, shelter operations continue in Bethel, along with feeding and evacuee support, until fire conditions allow evacuees to return; and

WHEREAS, the following conditions exist as a result of this disaster: emergency response and management operations with personnel, equipment, and logistical support costs to combat the fire and protect community structures and infrastructure; and temporary relocation, sheltering, and mass care support for over 100 residents from four different communities; and

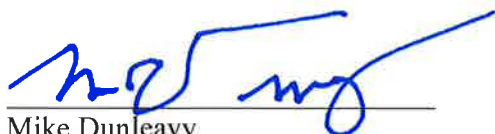
WHEREAS, there is ongoing growth to current fires, new fires starting, forecasted fire danger, and an unknown number of communities potentially threatened or damaged by fire; and

WHEREAS, the severity and magnitude of this emergency are beyond the timely and effective response and recovery capability of local resources, and there are insufficient regularly appropriated local funds to cover these requirements.

THEREFORE, on this 10th day of June 2022, under authority granted by Alaska Statute 26.23.020(c), I hereby declare that a condition of disaster emergency exists in the Lower Yukon REAA, including the communities of St. Mary's, Pitkas Point, Mountain Village, and Pilot Station, and this condition is of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant a disaster declaration in order to provide assistance.

FURTHER, the Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) is hereby authorized to utilize funds made available for these purposes which are considered necessary for disaster assistance to include disaster public assistance and necessary administrative and disaster management expenses. State funds are proposed to be spent under AS 26.23.020(i) and (k) and AS 26.23.050. The Commissioner of DMVA, or his designee, is the designated State Coordinator and is further authorized to task, as necessary, state departments and agencies in accordance with the State Emergency Operations Plan, and is further authorized to exercise, as necessary, the provisions provided under Alaska Statutes 26.23.020(g)(1), (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (9), and (10).

By:



Mike Dunleavy
Governor