



Governor Mike Dunleavy
STATE OF ALASKA

June 17, 2022

The Honorable Peter Micciche
Senate President
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

The Honorable Louise Stutes
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 208
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

President Micciche and Speaker Stutes:

On June 10, 2022, I verbally declared a state disaster emergency for the Lower Yukon Regional Educational Attendance Area (REAA) due to nearby wildfires. The state declaration authorizes funds be made available for the State's public assistance program, as well as necessary administrative and disaster management expenses.

Beginning in late May 2022, and continuing, unusual hot and dry weather, accompanied by dry lightning, caused multiple wildfires in southwest Alaska. The threat to communities and property required a local, state, and federal fire, emergency management, and mass care response. 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 now threatens the communities of St. Mary's, Pitkas Point, Mountain Village, and Pilot Station, all within the Lower Yukon REAA.

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.

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.

The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management will continue to work with the City of Bethel, Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation, state agencies, and private, non-profit, volunteer, and religious organizations to determine community response and recovery needs.

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When a better understanding of the total disaster costs is available, a revised finance plan will be provided to your office for submission to the Legislature.

The total estimated disaster-related permanent response and recovery costs for this disaster have not yet been quantified. Thus, I am limiting expenditures for this disaster to \$1 million from the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) pursuant to Alaska Statute (AS) 26.23.020(i) and (k), and per AS 26.23.025(a). This letter serves as the initial finance plan. The current balance of the DRF is \$2,225,685.24 and a supplemental appropriation is not required at this time.

Sincerely,



Mike Dunleavy
Governor

Enclosure: Declaration of Disaster Emergency

cc: The Honorable Click Bishop, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska State Senate
The Honorable Bert Stedman, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska State Senate
The Honorable Neal Foster, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska State House of Representatives
The Honorable Kelly Merrick, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska State House of Representatives
The Honorable Lyman Hoffman, District S, Alaska State Senate
The Honorable Tiffany Zulkosky, District 38, Alaska State House of Representatives
Neil Steininger, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Akis Gialopsos, Legislative Director, Office of the Governor