Spencer J. Cox

Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER
2026-05

Declaring a State of Emergency in Certain Counties Due to Wildfires and Flooding Related to Wildfires

WHEREAS, due to prolonged drought conditions, Utah has experienced an overwhelming fire season, with over 590 fires and almost 380,000 acres burned;

WHEREAS, the Cottonwood Fire in Beaver and Piute counties has consumed at least 97,464 acres;

WHEREAS, these and other wildfires throughout the state have caused tremendous harm to individuals and families, the loss of homes, damage to structures and critical infrastructure, and significant economic impacts due to loss of recreational access, canceled tourist reservations, and reduced revenue for local businesses;

WHEREAS, fighting wildfires and protecting the public from risks of wildfires have placed immense burdens on firefighting and law enforcement personnel, local governments, and emergency managers;

WHEREAS, the wildfires and existing weather conditions in Beaver, Piute, and other counties require immediate suppression to mitigate the threat to human life, structures, homes, livestock, and existing drinking water supplies;

WHEREAS, during the 2026 fire season, Utah has had three Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) declared fires burning simultaneously: the Cottonwood, Iron, and Cherry fires.

WHEREAS, the enduring marks left on our landscape by wildfires, such as burn scars, debris flows, and post-fire flooding, create significant issues after wildfires are contained, including burn scars from the Thompson Ridge (2023), Silver King (2024), and Monroe Canyon (2025) fires located in Beaver, Piute, and Sevier counties;

WHEREAS, 18 Utah counties have declared local emergencies for fire, flood, and drought conditions since April 2026;

WHEREAS, damaging flood events have recently impacted many communities throughout the state of Utah;

WHEREAS, the flooding has displaced residents, damaged homes and property, and disrupted lives;

WHEREAS, flooding in Beaver County has completely destroyed parts of State Route 153 in Beaver Canyon;

WHEREAS, flooding has deprived Marysvale, Junction, and Circleville in Piute County and Beaver City in Beaver County of access to culinary and agricultural water, has compromised the structural integrity of water systems and irrigation systems, and has threatened wells and water lines;

WHEREAS, flooding in Sevier County, including the town of Koosharem, has damaged homes and property and impacted water supplies;

WHEREAS, small county budgets, limited public works staffing, limited equipment, multiple simultaneous incidents, and extraordinary overtime costs have had a major impact on our rural communities;

WHEREAS, the potential for future and additional flooding in the burn scars or other areas impacted by fires in counties listed in this order still exists and is expected to continue for the remainder of the summer monsoon season;

WHEREAS, the costs arising from the fire and flood damage exceed local capability, state resources have already been heavily committed, and recovery costs may exceed available funding;

WHEREAS, declaring a state of emergency will facilitate the protection of persons and property from the impacts of wildfires, flooding, and potential flooding in the counties listed below and expedite the use of state resources, including Hazard Mitigation funding, as well as support requests for federal and interstate resources, if required;

WHEREAS, the declaration of emergency will also permit the state of Utah to request and receive mutual aid assistance from other states through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, if required;

WHEREAS, Utah Code § 53-2a-204(1)(a) authorizes the governor to utilize all available resources of state government as reasonably necessary to cope with a state of emergency;

WHEREAS, these conditions meet the definition of a state of emergency described in the Disaster Response and Recovery Act, specifically in Utah Code § 53-2a-206(1); and

WHEREAS, Utah Code § 53-2a-206(1) authorizes the governor to declare a state of emergency by executive order;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Spencer J. Cox, governor of the state of Utah, by the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of this state, hereby do the following:

1. **Declaration of Emergency**. I declare a state of emergency in Beaver, Piute, and Sevier counties due to the fires, flooding, and risks of flooding described in this Order.
2. **Emergency Operations Plan**. I activate the state Emergency Operations Plan for the duration of the state of emergency.

THIS ORDER is effective immediately and shall remain in effect for 30 days, unless the legislature extends the state of emergency.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Utah. Done on this, the 22 day of July, 2026.

Spencer J. Cox
Governor, State of Utah

ATTEST:

Deidre M. Henderson
Lieutenant Governor, State of Utah