



EXECUTIVE ORDER 2026-05

WHEREAS, North Dakota has experienced above average temperatures, persistent heat, breezy winds, low humidity, and dry vegetation, which has contributed to an increased likelihood of rapidly developing wildland fires this summer and fall; and,

WHEREAS, persistent heat and lack of precipitation have accelerated the drying of grass, brush, and trees, increasing the potential for new starts and rapid fire growth; and,

WHEREAS, recently observed fire behavior has been active and becoming more difficult to suppress; and,

WHEREAS, since July 1, 2026, the state has experienced a 30% increase in reported fires and anticipates this trend will continue; and,

WHEREAS, the National Multi-Agency Coordination Group (NMAC) has designated the nation at National Preparedness Level 5, the highest wildfire readiness level, indicating that firefighting resources are heavily committed and that numerous wildfires remain uncontained across the country, resulting in limited federal support available for new fires and competing national priorities; and,

WHEREAS, the August 4, 2026, U.S. Drought Monitor indicates that drought conditions range from abnormally dry to severe across much of North Dakota with continued expansion and worsening of existing drought conditions anticipated; and,

WHEREAS, conditions across the state have not improved and are not expected to improve based on the most current National Weather Service (NWS) Climate Prediction Center outlook signaling for temperatures to trend above normal with precipitation leaning below normal for fall 2026; and,

WHEREAS, most local and tribal jurisdictions have fire declarations and restrictions currently in effect; and,

WHEREAS, increased outdoor human activity is expected to increase wildfire starts; and,

WHEREAS, the potential exists for rapidly moving wildland fires that threaten the safety of North Dakotans, their communities, and farmsteads, and may result in infrastructure, wildlife, livestock, feed, and crop losses, as well as damage to structures and miles of fencing; and,

WHEREAS, state resources, including the State Wildland Fire Task Force, have been, and will likely continue to be, required to fight wildland fires in North Dakota; and,

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the State of North Dakota to assist its citizens in proactively addressing emergencies, disasters, and other hardships.

NOW THEREFORE, Kelly Armstrong, as Governor of North Dakota, by virtue of the authority vested under Article V, Section 1, North Dakota Constitution and Chapter 37-17.1, North Dakota Century Code, hereby declares a statewide fire emergency and orders activation of the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) to assist local and tribal officials; to prevent injuries and save lives; alleviate hardships; implement appropriate response and recovery actions and future mitigation measures; and facilitate restoration of services and infrastructure. All state agencies, including the North Dakota Department of Emergency Services, the North Dakota Forest Service, and the North Dakota National Guard, are ordered to maintain high readiness levels of wildland fire-related resources and capabilities in preparation for timely execution of their respective responsibilities pursuant to the SEOP. The Adjutant General is authorized to activate and make available North Dakota National Guard resources to support state agencies and local and tribal governments based upon normal cost shares.

This order is issued pursuant to the following authority and for the following reasons:

1. The Governor is vested with the executive authority pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the North Dakota Constitution; and,
2. The Governor is vested with statutory authority to issue executive orders to minimize or avert the effects of a disaster or emergency pursuant to Chapter 37-17.1 of the North Dakota Century Code; and,
3. A coordinated and effective effort of all state agencies is required to minimize the impact of disasters and emergencies in this state.

This order is in effect immediately and shall remain in effect until December 1, 2026, or until it is rescinded.

Executed at Bismarck, North Dakota, this 7 day of August 2026.


Kelly Armstrong
Governor

Attest:


Michael Howe
Secretary of State