

Gov. Lujan Grisham meets with federal officials on wildfires and disaster relief

Written by gallupsun
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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham met with federal lands and emergency response officials in Washington, D.C. on May 20 to discuss national forest management in New Mexico and advocate for additional federal assistance as multiple wildfires continue to burn across the state, including one that began as a federally prescribed burn that escaped containment.

Following both her call with President Joe Biden and her meeting with Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Deanne Criswell earlier in the week of May 16, Lujan Grisham met with U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack and U.S. Forest Service Chief Randy Moore before also meeting with U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas regarding FEMA assistance.

Meeting with USDA and USFS leadership, Lujan Grisham advocated for additional local consultation and greater consideration before the initiation of prescribed burns on federal lands during New Mexico's windy season. She also emphasized the need to ensure that USDA disaster relief programs for New Mexico farmers and ranchers affected by wildfires fully cover related costs and losses. The leaders also discussed establishing economic opportunities for local communities throughout the recovery process, as well as maintaining weekly meetings with USDA leadership and state officials to ensure the federal agency is as responsive as possible to the needs of affected New Mexicans.

The governor also met with DHS Secretary Mayorkas to reiterate her request that FEMA approve all outstanding federal assistance requests for New Mexico. The governor has also formally requested that the federal government assume responsibility for 100% of the costs associated with the response and recovery for the wildfires under the federally declared disaster.

Lujan Grisham and members of New Mexico's congressional delegation previously met virtually with Chief Moore and additional federal leaders from the White House, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Forest Service, the Department of Interior, and FEMA, prior to the Hermits Peak/Calf Canyon fire becoming the largest in New Mexico history.

On May 21, the governor will also join her fiancé, Manuel Cordova, for a small, private marriage

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ceremony officiated by Vice President Kamala Harris.

The governor will return to New Mexico on May 22 and meet with local officials in Las Vegas to discuss ongoing response and recovery efforts at both the local and federal levels and meet with affected New Mexicans.

