

**Maj. Gen. Torrence Saxe**

*Commissioner & Adjutant General*



*Department of Military  
and Veterans Affairs*

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Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**April 17, 2024**

*Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*

Media Contact: Public Information Officer Jeremy Zidek 907-441-2337,

[Jeremy.Zidek@Alaska.gov](mailto:Jeremy.Zidek@Alaska.gov)

## **Governor Dunleavy Issues Disaster Declaration For 2024 South Tongass Fire**

**JOINT BASE ELMENDORF RICHARDSON, Alaska** — Governor Mike Dunleavy has issued a State Disaster Declaration for the 2024 South Tongass Fire which damaged the South Tongass Volunteer Fire Department (STVFD) building and the Emergency Medical Service(EMS)/Fire Fighting equipment housed in the building. The Disaster Declaration activates the state's Public Assistance program which is designed to restore critical infrastructure damaged by a disaster event to a pre-disaster condition.

On April 9<sup>th</sup>, the building housing the South Tongass Volunteer Fire Department caught fire. Two ambulances and one firetruck were destroyed. In addition, all medical service/firefighting equipment and supplies within the building were destroyed.

STVFD EMS and firefighting service providers continue to serve the community with an ambulance on loan from Wrangell and an engine on loan from the state.

"We are thankful we did not see any loss of life in this devastating fire," said Director Bryan Fisher, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. "Alaskan communities pull together when there is an emergency. The loan of emergency response apparatus and existing Ketchikan Gateway Borough mutual aid agreements ensure emergency response continues in the community."

The disaster declaration has activated the state's Public Assistance programs. The Public Assistance program reimburses communities and jurisdictions for emergency response costs, emergency protective measures, and can fund repair of critical infrastructure damaged by the declared disaster event.

The state's Public Assistance program may reimburse a community for items not covered by insurance, and reimburse for emergency cost directly associated with the declared disaster event.

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