



Office of the Governor

**MICHELLE LUJAN GRISHAM**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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May 27, 2022

## **Governor Lujan Grisham statement on cause of Calf Canyon Fire**

SANTA FE – Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham issued a statement following the announcement by the U.S. Forest Service that a federal pile burn holdover ignited the Calf Canyon Fire, which merged with the Hermits Peak Fire to become the largest fire in New Mexico history:

“The pain and suffering of New Mexicans caused by the actions of the U.S. Forest Service – an agency that is intended to be a steward of our lands – is unfathomable.

"This is a first step toward the federal government taking full responsibility for the largest wildfire in state history, which has destroyed hundreds of homes, displaced tens of thousands of New Mexicans, and cost the state and local governments millions of dollars. I appreciate the U.S. Forest Service assuming responsibility for the federal actions that caused this terrible crisis.

"It is evident that the federal government *must* take a hard look at their fire management practices and make sure they account for a rapidly changing climate. New Mexico and the West must take every precaution to prevent fires of this magnitude from occurring, especially as precipitation levels continue to decrease and temperatures rise.”

Following the governor’s meeting with U.S. Forest Service leadership last week, the agency announced a 90-day pause on all prescribed burns and a thorough evaluation of prescribed burning practices. The Hermits Peak Fire was caused by a federal prescribed burn.

The Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak fire has burned more than 312,000 acres and fire suppression costs to date exceed \$132 million. The U.S. Forest Service will now pay for 100% of those costs, which increase by around \$5 million every day.

This announcement is separate from the governor's pending request to President Biden to direct the Federal Emergency Management Administration to pay for 100% of costs related to a broad range of fire-related recovery efforts, including debris removal and other emergency measures.

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