



# State of South Carolina

## Office of the Governor

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Governor Sanford Issues State of Emergency for Horry County** **DOZENS OF HOMES ALREADY DESTROYED** **AS FIRE NOW COVERS MORE THAN 15,000 ACRES**

**Columbia, S.C. – April 23, 2009** – Governor Sanford today issued a State of Emergency for Horry County as a wildfire that has already consumed 15,000 acres and destroyed an estimated 70 homes continued.

The state Forestry Commission is the primary agency in charge of fighting the fire, and the state Emergency Management Division has also deployed support assets to the scene in consultation with the Governor's Office. The state Emergency Operations Center has been activated, with assets dispatched to fight the fire including a National Guard helicopter and other personnel.

State and local officials have already evacuated 2,500 people from their homes, and may evacuate more as the fire continues to spread. Three shelters to accommodate those leaving their homes have been opened, and those shelters are currently housing approximately 250 people.

"This has already proved to be a devastating event for Horry County, and it isn't over," Gov. Sanford said. "This fire is continuing to spread, and it's incredibly important that people near the affected area pay close attention to emergency announcements and news outlets about developments with this disaster. We are continuing to work actively with the state Emergency Management Division and the Forestry Commission in determining what state assets are needed, and this action we've taken will allow our administration to deploy whatever is necessary on this front. In the meantime, I'd ask that every South Carolinian join Jenny, the boys and me in offering thoughts and prayers to those affected, and for every South Carolinian to think about ways in which they can help."

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