NEBRASKA
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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Jim Pillen, Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nebraska Wildfire Hay Recovery Program Supports Ranchers in Need

June 16, 2026 (Lincoln, Neb.) — Gov. Jim Pillen, in partnership with the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, is launching the Nebraska Wildfire Hay Recovery Program as part of ongoing efforts to support ranchers impacted by historic wildfires in western Nebraska.

The wildfires have destroyed grazing pastures, winter feed supplies, fencing and other agricultural infrastructure. This program will provide immediate relief by allowing Nebraskans to donate hay harvested from eligible state highway rights-of-way and help ranchers continue operations during recovery.

Each year, NDOT issue permits authorizing the mowing and harvesting of hay on state highway rights-of-way from July 29 through Sept. 15. While the statute was not originally designed as a donation program, harvested hay can become an important local resource when voluntarily donated to Nebraska cattle producers facing feed shortages due to wildfires.

“One of the things that makes Nebraska special is how we come together during difficult times,” said Gov. Jim Pillen. “This effort turns an existing resource into meaningful support for ranchers who have experienced tremendous losses from these wildfires. It’s Nebraskans helping fellow Nebraskans.”

Landowners adjacent to the right-of-way receive first priority for hay harvesting permits through July 29. Other applicants may apply beginning July 30 and are limited to five miles of right-of-way annually. Permit holders must obtain an NDOT haying permit, sign a liability release accepting all risks associated with hay quality and harvesting activities, provide proof of liability insurance of at least $1 million, and follow all NDOT rules and safety regulations.

#MORE#

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The Nebraska Department of Agriculture offers a listing of transportation options and locations accepting donated hay at nda.nebraska.gov/disasterresources. Questions regarding transportation assistance may be directed to the Nebraska Department of Agriculture to 800-831-0550 or agr.webmaster@nebraska.gov.

For information regarding hay permits, including eligibility, application procedures and permit requirements, contact the Nebraska Department of Transportation. Additional information on NDOT's hay permit program is available at dot.nebraska.gov/business-center/permits/hay-harvest.

#NDOT#

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