LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH & GENERAL COUNSEL

Bill Summary

Date:11/18/2025 | Policy Analyst: Bo Wood | Prepared For: Business and Labor Interim Committee

FL1119: Construction and Fire Codes Amendments

Key Points

- This bill adopts the 2024 International Wildland-Urban Interface Code (IWUIC) as part of the Utah Construction Code. The first version of the IWUIC was released in 2006 and is the current standard in Utah (15A-2-103(2)).
- The 2024 edition of the UWUIC provides more detailed requirements for building materials, defensible space, emergency vehicle access, water supply, and hazard mapping.
- The bill excludes Section 602, which would require automatic sprinkler systems for new class 1 construction.

Comparison of 2006 and 2024 IWUIC

1. Scope and Intent

2006:

- Primarily focused on defining minimal fire protection standards for new developments located in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).
- Applied mainly to new construction, without much emphasis on existing structures or regional hazard mapping.

2024:

- Broader scope incorporating climate adaptation, resilience, and defensible space modernization.
- Stronger coordination with International Building Code (IBC) and International Residential Code (IRC).
- Introduces risk assessment methodology for local jurisdictions to identify WUI zones based on updated fire hazard data.

OLRGC is a nonpartisan staff office of the Legislature, and the contents of this document should not be considered in support for or opposition to the legislation. This document is a high-level summary and may not include an exhaustive list of all proposed changes contained in the legislation.

2. Hazard Classification and Mapping

2006:

- Basic classification system defining "moderate," "high," and "extreme" fire hazard severity zones, often relying on static maps.

2024:

- Requires data-driven hazard mapping using fuel models, topography, and weather analyses (e.g., GIS-supported hazard maps).
- Aligns with NFPA 1144 (Standard for Reducing Structure Ignition Hazards from Wildland Fire).
- Adds detailed criteria for updating hazard maps as environmental conditions or land use change.

3. Building Materials and Construction Standards

2006:

- Introduced basic ignition-resistant construction categories (Class 1, 2, 3).
- Materials requirements for roofs, walls, windows, and vents were limited.

2024:

- Expanded requirements for ember resistance, including:
  - Vent screening standards (≤ 1/8 inch mesh).
  - Class A roofing material mandatory in all but lowest-risk zones.
  - Enhanced siding, decking, and soffit protection standards.
- Aligns with modern testing referenced from ASTM E2886, E2726, and WUI-compliant assemblies.

4. Defensible Space and Vegetation Management

2006:

- Relatively simple "Defensible Space" section, recommending clearance around structures (typically 30–100 ft).
- Limited species or fuel treatment guidance.

2024:

- Detailed, performance-based defensible space zones (Zone 0, 1, and 2):
- Zone 0 (0–5 ft): No combustible materials near structures.
- Zone 1 (5–30 ft): Fuel reduction and plant spacing.
- Zone 2 (30–100 ft): Maintenance of low fuel loads.
- Stronger emphasis on ongoing maintenance and local vegetation ordinances.

5. Access and Infrastructure

2006:

- Basic requirements for emergency vehicle access and water supply.

2024:

- Enhanced guidance on:
- Ingress/egress redundancy for evacuation routes.
- Fire apparatus turning radius and road gradient limits.
- Minimum on-site water supply and hydrant spacing standards (linked with IFC updates).

6. Existing Buildings and Retrofit Provisions

2006:

- Did not apply retroactively to existing buildings.

2024:

- Introduces retrofit guidance for existing WUI structures:
  - Ember-resistant vents and decks.
  - Replacement roofing requirements.
  - Retroactive vegetation clearance in high-risk zones.
- Encourages phased compliance through local ordinances.

7. Integration with Other Codes and Standards

2006:

- - Functioned largely as a standalone model code.

2024:

- Now integrated into ICC's code family, cross-referencing:
  - International Fire Code (IFC)
  - International Residential Code (IRC)
  - International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC)
- Incorporates modern hazard-mitigation language and cross-references FEMA guidance.

8. Administrative and Enforcement Updates

2006:

- Relied on local designation of authority with general enforcement provisions.

2024:

- Strengthened administrative provisions for certification, inspection, and annual maintenance checks.
- New appendices for community wildfire protection planning (CWPP).