

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING WORKERS' COMPENSATION FUND FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY

2013 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Karen Mayne

House Sponsor: Don L. Ipson

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This concurrent resolution of the Legislature recognizes the Workers' Compensation Fund for its dedication to the safety of Utah workers.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

► recognizes the Workers' Compensation Fund for its efforts to improve the safety of workers in the state of Utah.

Special Clauses:

None

Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:

WHEREAS, the Workers' Compensation Fund (WCF) insures Utah employers against liability for compensation-based, job-related accidental injuries and occupational diseases and assures payment of this compensation to Utah employees who are entitled to it;

WHEREAS, WCF is a quasi-public corporation, owned by its policyholders and governed by a seven member board of directors;

WHEREAS, for the last 95 years, WCF has been a reliable leader in Utah's workers' compensation system;

WHEREAS, in 1917, the Utah Legislature passed the Workers' Compensation Act,



28 requiring all employers to obtain workers' compensation insurance coverage;

29 WHEREAS, that same year, the Legislature appropriated \$40,000 from the state
30 treasury for WCF to begin writing insurance;

31 WHEREAS, this loan was repaid by WCF in four years, and from that time forward
32 WCF has operated financially independent of the state;

33 WHEREAS, WCF, then called the State Insurance Fund, was created to provide
34 competitively priced insurance to Utah employers;

35 WHEREAS, annually, WCF recognizes a group of policyholders who have successfully
36 implemented a culture of safety in their businesses and are awarded the "Charles A. Caine
37 Safety Award," named after WCF's first manager in 1917;

38 WHEREAS, every year since 1992, WCF has paid a dividend to its policyholders, and
39 during the past two decades this has resulted in \$339,000,000 in dividends to WCF
40 policyholders;

41 WHEREAS, WCF's ability to pay dividends is a credit to its policyholders and their
42 employees who have worked together to improve workplace safety statewide;

43 WHEREAS, WCF has championed safety awareness in advertising campaigns such as
44 "Be Careful Out There," and through such advertising encourages employees to "remember
45 who's waiting for you" as a father, mother, or loved one when you come home from work;

46 WHEREAS, WCF's efforts to promote safety awareness have been directed at Utah's
47 English and non-English speaking communities;

48 WHEREAS, during peak highway construction, WCF cooperated with the Utah
49 Department of Transportation to promote safety through a media campaign encouraging drivers
50 to "Slow down, these guys don't have airbags";

51 WHEREAS, because coordinating medical care is critical in controlling costs and
52 providing quality treatment, WCF's medical case managers evaluate injured employees'
53 circumstances and coordinate care to help in their recovery;

54 WHEREAS, WCF's certified counselors work with employers, injured workers, and
55 physicians to confirm work capabilities, help with job modifications, and return injured
56 workers to a productive environment;

57 WHEREAS, for inpatient hospitalizations and many outpatient procedures, a team of
58 registered nurses and physician consultants proactively reviews and approves proposed medical

59 treatments;

60 WHEREAS, partnering with its policyholders on workplace safety is one of WCF's
61 most important priorities;

62 WHEREAS, in 2011, WCF's Safety and Health Department introduced On Demand
63 Seminars, which stream online, allowing WCF policyholders to train their employees at any
64 time in any place;

65 WHEREAS, in addition, WCF has more than 100 free safety seminars, numerous
66 online safety resources, industry-specific safety round tables, and on-site training;

67 WHEREAS, WCF's safety consultation services, which are customized to the needs of
68 the policyholders, include industrial hygiene consultation, safety program evaluation, risk
69 assessment, and lift safety;

70 WHEREAS, WCF supports the Rocky Mountain Center for Occupational and
71 Environmental Health (Rocky Mountain Center) at the University of Utah;

72 WHEREAS, the mission of the Rocky Mountain Center is "protecting the worker and
73 the environment through interdisciplinary education, research, and service";

74 WHEREAS, the Rocky Mountain Center, one of seventeen Education and Research
75 Centers in the United States sponsored by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and
76 Health (NIOSH), trains graduate students in industrial hygiene, hazardous substances,
77 occupational injury prevention, ergonomics and safety, as well as occupational medicine;

78 WHEREAS, since the inception of the Rocky Mountain Center in 1977, over 450
79 graduate students have received degrees, and a large number of these professionals remain in
80 Utah and are working to improve the health and safety of Utah's workplaces;

81 WHEREAS, over sixteen years, WCF has provided 102 Safe Workplace Scholarships
82 to individuals doing graduate work to earn a master's degree or PhD at the Rocky Mountain
83 Center;

84 WHEREAS, WCF named its Safe Workplace Scholarship Program in honor of Utah's
85 own 20th-century pioneer in occupational medicine and workplace safety, Dr. Paul S. Richards,
86 a dynamic figure who cared for miners and local residents at the Bingham Canyon Hospital for
87 nearly 30 years beginning in the 1920s;

88 WHEREAS, nationally, Dr. Richards was among the first to recognize the relationship
89 between silica exposure in the mines and lung disease, pneumonia, and other illnesses, and was

90 instrumental in bringing about Utah's first Occupational Disease Disability Act in 1941;

91 WHEREAS, WCF Legacy of Learning Scholarship Program has provided educational
92 assistance to the spouses and children of workers who lost their lives in work related accidents
93 insured by WCF;

94 WHEREAS, since 1990, over 1,000 scholarships have been awarded, worth over \$1.3
95 million;

96 WHEREAS, during 2011, WCF safety staff assisted policyholders by providing 1,418
97 inspections, 3,828 consultations, 207 seminars, and 861 on-site training classes, training 18,139
98 people in the process;

99 WHEREAS, many Utah associations partner with WCF in providing WCF-approved
100 safety courses, including the Utah Manufacturers Association, Associated General Contractors,
101 Homebuilders Association of Utah, Utah Roofing Contractors, and the Utah Truckers
102 Association;

103 WHEREAS, WCF also partners with local trade unions in providing apprenticeship
104 facilities and training, and programs have included scholarships for veterans in "Helmets To
105 Hardhats" programs;

106 WHEREAS, WCF employs highly qualified safety and health professionals, including
107 sixteen board certified safety professionals, four board certified industrial hygienists, and six
108 individuals with master's degrees;

109 WHEREAS, the state of Utah is not liable for the expenses, liabilities, or debts of
110 WCF;

111 WHEREAS, in February 2012, the A.M. Best Company affirmed WCF's "A"
112 (Excellent) financial-strength rating;

113 WHEREAS, on an inflation-adjusted basis, Utah workers' compensation insurance rates
114 today are lower than rates in the early 1990s, making the cost of workers' compensation
115 insurance for Utah employers among the lowest in the nation; and

116 WHEREAS, WCF has demonstrated a strong commitment to the safety of Utah's
117 workers;

118 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
119 Governor concurring therein, recognizes the Workers' Compensation Fund for its dedication to
120 the safety of Utah workers.

121 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Workers'
122 Compensation Fund.

Legislative Review Note
as of 1-3-13 10:13 AM

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel