

**CONCURRENT RESOLUTION ON COMPREHENSIVE
STATEWIDE WILDLAND FIRE PREVENTION,
PREPAREDNESS, AND SUPPRESSION POLICY**

2014 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers

House Sponsor: Joel K. Briscoe

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This concurrent resolution of the Legislature and the Governor expresses support for Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy and strongly urges its implementation.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ expresses the Legislature's strong desire to reduce catastrophic wildfires;
- ▶ expresses support for the recommendations in the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy;
- ▶ strongly urges the Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to implement the recommendations in the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy in partnership with the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Steering Committee and guided by the report's recommendations;
- ▶ strongly urges the state forester to report to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee regarding progress on implementing the strategy, particularly the progress of the "Regionally Significant Projects"; and
- ▶ strongly urges the Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to coordinate the development of a Comprehensive Statewide Wildland Fire Prevention, Preparedness, and Suppression Policy.



28 **Special Clauses:**

29 None



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

32 WHEREAS, catastrophic wildland fires continue to be a major problem in Utah;

33 WHEREAS, catastrophic wildland fires inflict significant damage and financial burdens
34 on the state and its citizens;

35 WHEREAS, the significant impacts of catastrophic wildland fires to state and local
36 economies, critical infrastructure, the environment, and private landowners have increased and
37 are projected to continue to increase in frequency and severity;

38 WHEREAS, poor forest health caused by invasive species, lack of setback in plant
39 succession, disease, and changes in climatic conditions have produced large areas in the state
40 with heavy fuels or "firesheds" which, if ignited, can burn in a catastrophic manner;

41 WHEREAS, Utah experiences an average of 1,498 wildfires each year that result in
42 millions of dollars in taxpayer expense;

43 WHEREAS, studies show that every dollar spent in prevention of wildfires results in a
44 savings of \$17 in suppression costs;

45 WHEREAS, following the fire season of 2012, the Governor directed the commissioner
46 of the Department of Agriculture and Food to develop a strategy to reduce the risk of
47 catastrophic wildfire in Utah;

48 WHEREAS, the commissioner of the Department of Agriculture and Food convened a
49 Statewide Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Steering Committee;

50 WHEREAS, in December 2013, the Statewide Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction
51 Steering Committee released a Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy, which contains
52 specific recommendations to address fire suppression;

53 WHEREAS, the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy includes seven
54 recommendations:

- 55 1. Statewide Coordination of Mitigation Resources.
- 56 2. A Catastrophic Fire Reduction Fund.
- 57 3. Regional Collaborative Working Groups to Perform Needs Assessment and
- 58 Prioritization Across the State.

- 59 4. Technical Committees to Respond to Specific Concerns of Statewide Importance.
- 60 5. Adopt Key Recommendations from the National Cohesive Wildland Fire
- 61 Management Strategy.
- 62 6. Increase Public Understanding and Participation.
- 63 7. The central steering committee should report annually to the Governor and the
- 64 Legislature the actions planned and taken.

65 WHEREAS, the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy identifies "Regionally
66 Significant Projects" recommended by six regional working groups that include a full
67 complement of prevention and preparedness actions; and

68 WHEREAS, the administration and staff of the Utah Department of Natural Resources'
69 Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands have knowledge, expertise, and processes in place
70 to execute the recommendations in the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy:

71 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
72 Governor concurring therein, expresses a strong desire to reduce catastrophic wildfires.

73 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor express support
74 for the recommendations and initiatives contained in the Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction
75 Strategy and recognize the positive impacts of the recommendations within the report.

76 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor strongly urge the
77 Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to implement the recommendations in the
78 Catastrophic Wildfire Reduction Strategy in partnership with the Catastrophic Wildfire
79 Reduction Steering Committee and guided by the report's recommendations.

80 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor strongly urge the
81 state forester to report to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim
82 Committee regarding progress on implementing the strategy, particularly the progress of the
83 "Regionally Significant Projects."

84 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor strongly urge the
85 Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands to coordinate the development of a
86 Comprehensive Statewide Wildland Fire Prevention, Preparedness, and Suppression Policy.

87 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Utah
88 Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands; the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food; the
89 United States Bureau of Land Management; the United States Forest Service; the Utah

90 Association of Counties; Trout Unlimited; the Nature Conservancy; the Beaver County
91 Commission; the Box Elder County Commission; the Daggett County Commission; the Iron
92 County Commission; the Kane County Commission; the Tooele County Commission; the
93 Washington County Commission; the Utah Conservation Commission; the School and
94 Institutional Trust Lands Administration; the Natural Resources Conservation Service in the
95 United States Department of Agriculture; and the members of Utah's congressional delegation.

Legislative Review Note
as of 2-10-14 5:20 PM

Office of Legislative Research and General Counsel