

PUBLIC LANDS WILDFIRE STUDY

2016 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Ken Ivory

Senate Sponsor: Evan J. Vickers

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill requires the Conservation Commission to study and analyze certain issues regarding wildfires on public lands within Utah.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

► requires the Conservation Commission within the Department of Agriculture and Food to work with Utah State University and certain conservation districts to:

- complete a study and economic analysis of certain issues regarding wildfires on public lands within Utah, including the impact of wildfires on the state's watershed and air quality; and

- report to the Legislature's Commission for the Stewardship of Public Lands; and

► allows the Conservation Commission to contract with another state agency or private entity to complete the required study and economic analysis.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

This bill appropriates in fiscal year 2016:

► to the Department of Agriculture and Food as a one-time appropriation, from the General Fund, one-time, \$200,000.

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

ENACTS:

4-18-109, Utah Code Annotated 1953

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Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **4-18-109** is enacted to read:

4-18-109. Public lands wildfire study and analysis -- Report.

(1) As used in this section:

(a) "Conservation districts" means the conservation districts created under Title 17D, Chapter 3, Conservation District Act.

(b) "Public lands" means the same as that term is defined in Section [63L-6-102](#).

(2) (a) The commission shall work with Utah State University and the conservation districts to conduct a study and analysis of the environmental and economic impact of:

(i) potential catastrophic wildfires on public lands within Utah, including the impact to the state and the state's counties, of catastrophic wildfire on the state's watershed and air quality; and

(ii) changing rangeland and forest management practices to reduce the probability and severity of wildfires in Utah.

(b) The study and economic analysis described in Subsection (2)(a) shall:

(i) document historical acreage and severity of wildfires in Utah;

(ii) assess and document differences in state and federal wildfire preparedness activities;

(iii) update and expand upon existing studies of wildfire fuel loads on public lands, including consideration of insect damage, invasive species, grazing management, and timber management;

(iv) assess the relative size, probability, and severity of wildfires on public lands in Utah, including consideration of factors that lead to wildfires, including biology and characteristics of land;

(v) identify the most cost-effective wildfire preparedness actions; and

(vi) develop a statistical model that would allow public land managers to more efficiently allocate funds between wildfire expenditures and other expenditures.

58 (3) The commission, in consultation with Utah State University and the conservation
59 districts, may contract with another state agency or private entity to assist with the study and
60 analysis required by Subsection (2).

61 (4) Before December 31, 2016, the commission shall work with Utah State University
62 and the conservation districts to submit a final report on the study and analysis described in
63 Subsection (2), including proposed legislation and recommendations, to the Legislature's
64 Commission for the Stewardship of Public Lands.

65 **Section 2. Appropriation.**

66 Under the terms and conditions of Title 63J, Chapter 1, Budgetary Procedures Act, for
67 the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2015, and ending June 30, 2016, the following sums of money
68 are appropriated from resources not otherwise appropriated, or reduced from amounts
69 previously appropriated, out of the funds or amounts indicated. These sums of money are in
70 addition to any amounts previously appropriated for fiscal year 2016.

71 To the Department of Agriculture and Food - Resource Conservation

72 From General Fund, One-time

\$200,000

73 Schedule of Programs:

74 Conservation Commission

\$200,000

75 The Legislature intends that:

76 (1) the appropriation provided under this section be used to carry out the requirements
77 of Section [4-18-109](#);

78 (2) under Section [63J-1-603](#), the appropriation provided under this section not lapse at
79 the close of fiscal year 2016; and

80 (3) use of any non-lapsing funds is limited to carrying out the requirements of Section
81 [4-18-109](#).

82 **Section 3. Effective date.**

83 If approved by two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, this bill takes effect
84 upon approval by the governor, or the day following the constitutional time limit of Utah
85 Constitution, Article VII, Section 8, without the governor's signature, or in the case of a veto,

86 the date of veto override.