



SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 08-025

BY SENATOR(S) Kopp, Gibbs, Romer, Harvey, Isgar, Taylor, Boyd, Brophy, Cadman, Groff, Johnson, Kester, Penry, Sandoval, Shaffer, Tapia, Tochtrop, and Wiens;

also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Witwer, Roberts, Scanlan, Curry, Gardner C., Jahn, Kerr J., Labuda, Massey, May M., McNulty, Buescher, Carroll T., Casso, Fischer, Frangas, Gardner B., Garza-Hicks, Hodge, Kerr A., King, Lambert, Liston, Looper, Lundberg, Marostica, McFadyen, McGihon, Middleton, Primavera, Rose, Soper, Stafford, Stephens, and White.

CONCERNING THE CREATION OF AN INTERIM COMMITTEE ON WILDFIRE ISSUES IN WILD LAND-URBAN INTERFACE AREAS.

WHEREAS, Wildfires are a part of the natural cycle of Colorado's forests, yet pose a danger to human life and property; and

WHEREAS, People are attracted to the forests and mountains of this state and increasingly have chosen to make their homes there; and

WHEREAS, Federal and state forest-management agencies have employed a policy of aggressive fire suppression for the past 70 years, resulting in an unnatural accumulation of potential fuel for wildfires and an accompanying increase in the size and severity of fires when they do occur; and

WHEREAS, Most forest fires during that 70-year period occurred, and were successfully fought, on public lands in remote areas far from human habitation; and

WHEREAS, The success of the fire suppression policy and of firefighting efforts in remote areas have given many residents of Colorado a false sense of security about the likelihood of naturally occurring fires on lands nearer to human habitation and, when such fires occur, the ability of firefighters to protect private property; and

WHEREAS, As mountain subdivisions proliferate, the difficulty of protecting individual homes and saving lives, as opposed to strategically deploying firefighting forces over large areas of uninhabited forest, places additional strain on firefighting personnel and budgets; and

WHEREAS, This factor is so significant as to have led to the coining of a new term by firefighters and urban planners, the "wild land-urban interface"; and

WHEREAS, Fire danger in the wild land-urban interface is increasing even more now as a result of several years' drought and the steady encroachment of tree-killing bark beetles; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Sixty-sixth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein:

(1) That there is hereby created a legislative committee, hereinafter referred to as the "committee", which shall meet during the interim after the 2008 Regular Session of the Sixty-sixth General Assembly to leverage existing studies and analyses relating to wildfire in wild land-urban interface areas in order to develop a series of legislative recommendations to present to the General Assembly.

(2) That the committee shall consist of eight members appointed as follows:

(a) Four members of the Senate, two appointed by the President of the Senate and two appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate; and

(b) Four members of the House of Representatives, two appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives and two appointed by the Minority Leader of the House of Representatives.

(3) That the committee shall:

(a) Hold hearings to receive information or public input regarding the following issues, at a minimum:

(I) Challenges posed to traditional methods of firefighting and the allocation of firefighting resources as a result of the increasing number and changing distribution of homes and other structures in the wild land-urban interface, and methods of overcoming those challenges;

(II) Available strategies to minimize and mitigate the danger of wildfire in the wild land-urban interface, and methods of employing those strategies; and

(III) Potential responses to the bark beetle epidemic, with particular

emphasis on market-based incentives for the removal and beneficial use of trees killed or threatened by bark beetles.

(b) Recommend legislation or other policy changes concerning the state's approach to these issues as it deems appropriate.

(4) That the meetings of the committee shall be public meetings.

(5) That the committee shall make written findings and recommendations on or before November 1, 2008, and make them available to the General Assembly in accordance with section 24-1-136 (9), Colorado Revised Statutes.

(6) That the Legislative Council Staff and the Office of Legislative Legal Services shall be available to assist the committee in carrying out its duties.

(7) That the legislative members of the committee shall be compensated as provided in section 2-2-307, Colorado Revised Statutes, for attendance at meetings of the committee and that all expenditures incurred by the committee shall be approved by the chair of the Legislative Council and paid by vouchers and warrants drawn as provided by law from moneys allocated to the Legislative Council for interim committees from appropriations made by the General Assembly.

Peter C. Groff
PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE

Andrew Romanoff
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