



ARIZONA STATE SENATE
Fifty-Sixth Legislature, Second Regular Session

FACT SHEET FOR H.B. 2751

interstate compact; fire management; aid

Purpose

An emergency measure that adopts the Great Plains Wildland Fire Protection Compact (Compact), entering into a mutual aid agreement with other member states for the purposes of forest firefighting.

Background

The Compact became operative in 2006 and is currently authorized by nine states, including Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Saskatchewan, South Dakota and Wyoming. Member states may make a request in a prescribed form to receive aid from other member states for forest firefighting. Requests for such aid are filled on a first-come first-serve basis ([GPIFC User Guide](#)).

If Arizona sends aid to other states and assumes the costs from doing so or requests aid from other states for the purposes of forest firefighting, there may be a fiscal impact to the state General Fund.

Provisions

Purpose and Participation

1. Allows the Governor to enter into the Compact on behalf of Arizona with any other state or states legally joining therein in an outlined form.
2. Declares that the purpose of the Compact is to promote effective prevention and control of forest fires in the Great Plains region of the United States by maintaining adequate forest firefighting services by the member states and providing for reciprocal aid in fighting forest fires among the compacting states of the region.
3. Specifies that the Compact is operative immediately as to those states ratifying it if any two or more of the member states have ratified the Compact.
4. Allows the State Forester, or the officer holding the equivalent position who is responsible for forest fire control in each state, to act as Compact Administrator for that state, consult with like officials of the other member states and implement cooperation between the states in forest fire prevention and control.
5. Allows the Compact Administrators of the member states to organize and coordinate the services of the member states and provide administrative integration in carrying out the purposes of the Compact.

6. Allows each member state to formulate and put into effect a forest fire plan for that state.

Request and Provision of Mutual Aid

7. Allows, if the state forest fire control agency of a member state requests aid from the state forest fire control agency of any other member state in combating, controlling or preventing forest fires, the state forest fire control agency of the state to which the request was made to render all possible aid to the requesting agency, consonant with maintaining protection at home.
8. Requires the employees of any member state to, if the forces of the state are rendering outside aid pursuant to the request of another member state under the Compact, to have, under the direction of the officers of the state to which the employees are rendering aid, the same powers, duties, rights, privileges and immunities as comparable employees of the state to which the employees are rendering aid, except the employees may not have the power of arrest.
9. Exempts a member state and the member state's officers and employees rendering outside aid from liability on account of any act or omission on the part of such forces while engaged in outside aid or on account of maintaining or using any equipment or supplies in connection with rendering the outside aid.
10. Requires all liability, with outlined exceptions, that may arise either under the laws of the requesting state, under the laws of the aiding state or under the laws of a third state on account of or in connection with a request for aid to be assumed and borne by the requesting state.
11. Requires any member state rendering outside aid to be reimbursed by the requesting state for any loss or damage to, or expense incurred in the operation of, any equipment used in answering a request for aid, and for the cost of all materials, transportation, wages, salaries and maintenance of employees and equipment incurred in connection with the request.
12. Specifies that the Compact does not prevent any assisting member state from assuming the loss, damage, expense or other cost from loaning the equipment or from donating the services to the receiving member state without charge or cost.
13. Requires each member state to ensure that workers' compensation benefits in conformity with the minimum legal requirements of the state are available to all employees and contract firefighters sent to a requesting state.
14. Includes, in the definition of *employee*, any volunteer or auxiliary legally included within the forest firefighting forces of the aiding state under the laws of the aiding state.
15. Allows Compact Administrators to formulate procedures for claims and reimbursement in accordance with laws of the member states.

Limitations on the Compact

16. Specifies that ratification of the Compact does not affect any existing statute so as to authorize or permit curtailment or diminution of the forest firefighting forces, equipment, services or facilities of any member state.

17. Specifies that the Compact does not authorize or permit any member state to curtail or diminish the state's forest firefighting forces, equipment, services or facilities.
18. Requires each member state to maintain adequate forest firefighting forces and equipment to meet demands for forest fire protection within the state's borders in the same manner and to the same extent as if the Compact were not operative.
19. Specifies that the Compact does not limit or restrict the powers of any state ratifying the Compact to provide for the prevention, control and extinguishment of forest fires or to prohibit the enactment or enforcement of state laws, rules or regulations intended to aid in the prevention, control and extinguishment in the state.
20. Specifies that the Compact does not affect any existing or future cooperative relationship or arrangement between the U.S. Forest Service and a member state or states.
21. Allows representatives of the U.S. Forest Service to attend meetings of the Compact Administrators.

Implementation and Withdrawal

22. Declares that the provisions of the Compact relating to reciprocal aid in combating, controlling or preventing forest fires are operative as between any state party to the Compact and any other state that is party to the Compact and any other state that is party to a regional forest fire protection compact in another region if the legislature of the other state has given assent to the mutual aid provisions of the Compact.
23. Requires the Compact to continue in force and remain binding on each state that ratifies the Compact until the legislature or governor of a state takes action to withdraw from the Compact.
24. Delays the effective date of a withdrawal from the Compact until six months after notice of the withdrawal has been sent by the chief executive of the state desiring to withdraw to the chief executives of all states then parties to the Compact.
25. Becomes effective on signature of the Governor, if the emergency clause is enacted.

House Action

LARA	2/12/24	DP	9-0-0-0
3 rd Read	2/26/24		53-3-3-0-1

Prepared by Senate Research
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RA/SDR/slp