

**First Regular Session
Seventieth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

REVISED

LLS NO. R15-0129.01 Ashley Zimmerman x2291

SJR15-004

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Roberts,

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Hamner,

Senate Committees

Agriculture, Natural Resources, & Energy

House Committees

Agriculture, Livestock, & Natural Resources

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 15-004

101 **CONCERNING REQUESTS TO THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REGARDING**
102 **SUPPORT FOR WILDLAND FIRE SUPPRESSION.**

1 WHEREAS, The threat of wildfire is a matter of serious concern
2 to Colorado residents, especially to those living in the wildland-urban
3 interface; and

4 WHEREAS, In the last decade, the average number of acres
5 burned by wildfires in Colorado has more than tripled; and

6 WHEREAS, Since 1994, Colorado has experienced some of its
7 worst fires on record, including:

8 ! The South Canyon Fire, also referred to as the Storm King
9 Fire, in 1994, which burned 2,115 acres and killed 14

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters indicate new material to be added to existing statute.
Dashes through the words indicate deletions from existing statute.

HOUSE
Amended Final Rdg.
March 18, 2015

SENATE
Final Reading
February 17, 2015

1 firefighters;

2 ! The Hayman Fire, in 2002, which burned 137,760 acres,
3 killed 5 firefighters, destroyed 600 total structures, and
4 remains the largest wildfire in Colorado by area;

5 ! The Missionary Ridge Fire, in 2002, which burned 71,739
6 acres, killed one firefighter, and destroyed 56 homes;

7 ! The Fourmile Canyon Fire, in 2010, which burned 6,181
8 acres and destroyed at least 162 homes;

9 ! The High Park Fire, in 2012, which burned 87,284 acres,
10 killed one person, and destroyed at least 248 homes;

11 ! The Waldo Canyon Fire, in 2012, which burned 18,247
12 acres, killed 2 people, and destroyed 346 homes;

13 ! The Black Forest Fire, in 2013, which burned 14,280 acres,
14 killed 2 people, and destroyed 511 homes;

15 ! The Royal Gorge Fire, in 2013, which burned 3,800 acres
16 and caused significant damage to Royal Gorge Park and the
17 Royal Gorge Bridge; and

18 ! The West Fork Fire Complex, in 2013, composed of 3
19 subsidiary fires that merged together, which burned
20 110,405 acres and forced the evacuation of the entire town
21 of South Fork; and

22 WHEREAS, According to the Congressional Research Service, as
23 of 2010, 36.2% of land in Colorado was federal land managed by the
24 Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, the Fish and Wildlife
25 Service, or the National Park Service; and

26 WHEREAS, Nearly 68% of Colorado's forests are federally
27 owned, 47% of which are owned by the United States Forest Service; and

28 WHEREAS, Other states, including California, Arizona, Oregon,
29 and Idaho, have experienced record wildfires in the last few years; and

30 WHEREAS, California has had 12 record-setting fires since 2000,

1 each one totaling over 105,000 acres burned; and

2

3 WHEREAS, While wildfire suppression is important, we must
4 learn from the past and not rely solely on suppression, instead also
5 focusing attention on mitigation and land management support; and

6 WHEREAS, More than 4.3 million acres of Colorado's forests are
7 affected by pine and spruce beetles that leave dying, dead, and decaying
8 trees in their wake; and

9 WHEREAS, Unless they are removed, the dying, dead, and
10 decaying trees within Colorado's forests will continue to increase the risk
11 of wildfire in Colorado; and

12 WHEREAS, Colorado recognizes the value of fire for forest health
13 and the need to use fire, as well as grazing, as a selective tool for
14 maintaining healthy forests in the state; and

15 WHEREAS, The increase in wildfires across the western United
16 States has led to an increase in federal agency budgets for wildfire
17 suppression, decreasing available moneys for mitigation and land
18 management support; now, therefore,

19 *Be It Resolved by the Senate of the Seventieth General Assembly*
20 *of the State of Colorado, the House of Representatives concurring herein:*

21 That we, the members of the Colorado General Assembly, ask the
22 federal government to:

23 (1) Create a separate line item in the federal budget for
24 catastrophic wildfires; and

25 (2) Purchase and deploy additional aerial firefighting equipment
26 to assist in fighting wildfires across the country.

27 *Be It Further Resolved,* That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent

1 to Ken Watkins, President of Colorado State Fire Chiefs; Paul Cooke,
2 Director of the Division of Fire Prevention and Control in the Department
3 of Public Safety; Mike Rogers, President, Colorado Professional Fire
4 Fighters; Steve Trujillo, President, Colorado State Fire Fighters
5 Association; Todd Richardson, State Fire Management Officer, Bureau
6 of Land Management Colorado State Office; Willie Thompson, Fire and
7 Aviation Management Director, U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain
8 Region; and each member of Colorado's congressional delegation.