



SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 15-004

BY SENATOR(S) Roberts,;
also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Hamner, Arndt, Becker J., Becker K., Brown, Buck, Buckner, Carver, Conti, Coram, Court, Danielson, DelGrosso, Dore, Duran, Esgar, Everett, Fields, Foote, Garnett, Ginal, Humphrey, Joshi, Kagan, Keyser, Klingenschmitt, Kraft-Tharp, Landgraf, Lawrence, Lebsock, Lee, Lontine, Lundeen, McCann, Melton, Mitsch Bush, Moreno, Navarro, Neville P., Nordberg, Pabon, Pettersen, Primavera, Priola, Rankin, Ransom, Rosenthal, Roupe, Ryden, Saine, Salazar, Sias, Singer, Tate, Thurlow, Tyler, Van Winkle, Vigil, Willett, Williams, Wilson, Windholz, Winter, Young, Hullinghorst.

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

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

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

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

- ! The South Canyon Fire, also referred to as the Storm King Fire, in 1994, which burned 2,115 acres and killed 14 firefighters;
- ! The Hayman Fire, in 2002, which burned 137,760 acres, killed 5 firefighters, destroyed 600 total structures, and remains the largest wildfire in Colorado by area;
- ! The Missionary Ridge Fire, in 2002, which burned 71,739 acres,

killed one firefighter, and destroyed 56 homes;

- ! The Fourmile Canyon Fire, in 2010, which burned 6,181 acres and destroyed at least 162 homes;
- ! The High Park Fire, in 2012, which burned 87,284 acres, killed one person, and destroyed at least 248 homes;
- ! The Waldo Canyon Fire, in 2012, which burned 18,247 acres, killed 2 people, and destroyed 346 homes;
- ! The Black Forest Fire, in 2013, which burned 14,280 acres, killed 2 people, and destroyed 511 homes;
- ! The Royal Gorge Fire, in 2013, which burned 3,800 acres and caused significant damage to Royal Gorge Park and the Royal Gorge Bridge; and
- ! The West Fork Fire Complex, in 2013, composed of 3 subsidiary fires that merged together, which burned 110,405 acres and forced the evacuation of the entire town of South Fork; and

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

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

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

WHEREAS, California has had 12 record-setting fires since 2000, each one totaling over 105,000 acres burned; and

==

WHEREAS, While wildfire suppression is important, we must learn from the past and not rely solely on suppression, instead also focusing

attention on mitigation and land management support; and

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Be It Further Resolved, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent to Ken Watkins, President of Colorado State Fire Chiefs; Paul Cooke, Director of the Division of Fire Prevention and Control in the Department of Public Safety; Mike Rogers, President, Colorado Professional Fire Fighters; Steve Trujillo, President, Colorado State Fire Fighters Association; Todd Richardson, State Fire Management Officer, Bureau

of Land Management Colorado State Office; Willie Thompson, Fire and Aviation Management Director, U.S. Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region; and each member of Colorado's congressional delegation.

Bill L. Cadman
PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE

Dickey Lee Hullinghorst
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Cindi L. Markwell
SECRETARY OF
THE SENATE

Marilyn Eddins
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES