

CHAPTER 342

NATURAL RESOURCES

SENATE BILL 22-007

BY SENATOR(S) Story and Lee, Ginal, Buckner, Danielson, Gonzales, Jaquez Lewis, Moreno, Fenberg;
 also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Cutter and Snyder, Amabile, Bennett, Bird, Boesenecker, Caraveo, Duran, Esgar, Exum, Froelich,
 Herod, Jodeh, Kipp, Lindsay, Lontine, McCormick, Michaelson Jenet, Mullica, Roberts, Titone, Valdez D., Weissman, Woodrow,
 Young.

AN ACT

**CONCERNING OUTREACH TO THE PUBLIC RELATING TO WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION PRACTICES,
 AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.**

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 23-31-313, **add** (3)(h) and (9.5) as follows:

23-31-313. Healthy forests - vibrant communities - funds created - outreach working group - definitions - legislative declaration - repeal. (3) Definitions. As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires:

(h) "WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE" MEANS AN AREA WHERE STRUCTURES OR OTHER HUMAN DEVELOPMENT MEET OR INTERMINGLE WITH WILDLAND VEGETATION.

(9.5) **Wildfire risk mitigation public outreach and educational campaign - legislative declaration.** (a) (1) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY HEREBY FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

(A) WILDFIRES INCREASINGLY POSE A THREAT TO HOMES AND COMMUNITIES IN COLORADO AS MORE PEOPLE MOVE INTO THE WILDLAND AREAS OF OUR STATE, AND LONG-TERM WEATHER AND CLIMATE TRENDS, INCLUDING DROUGHT AND WARMER TEMPERATURES, AS WELL AS THE BUILDUP OF WILDLAND FUELS, FURTHER INCREASE WILDFIRE RISK;

(B) IN 2020, COLORADO EXPERIENCED THE THREE LARGEST WILDFIRES IN ITS HISTORY, WITH THE FIRES BURNING OVER SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND ACRES, CAUSING

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SIGNIFICANT DISPLACEMENT, DEVASTATING COMMUNITIES, DEGRADING WATER AND AIR QUALITY, AND ULTIMATELY RESULTING IN THE LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE AND HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN PROPERTY LOSS AND DAMAGE;

(C) LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL AGENCIES AND ENTITIES CONTINUE TO ADDRESS THE SHORT- AND LONG-TERM SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS OF THESE FIRES;

(D) WITH MORE THAN HALF OF ALL COLORADANS LIVING IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE, THERE IS AN URGENT NEED FOR WILDFIRE PREVENTION AND PREPAREDNESS AT BOTH THE COMMUNITY AND INDIVIDUAL HOMEOWNER AND PROPERTY OWNER LEVELS;

(E) COORDINATED EDUCATION CONCERNING HOW, WHERE, AND WHY WILDFIRES BURN, AS WELL AS COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS TO INCREASE SURVIVABILITY OF HOMES AND PROPERTY, IS PARAMOUNT TO COEXISTING IN A WILDFIRE ENVIRONMENT; AND

(F) WHILE HOMEOWNERS AND PROPERTY OWNERS IN COLORADO BEAR THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY TO PREPARE THEIR HOMES AND PROPERTY FOR WILDFIRE, MANY STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND THIS RESPONSIBILITY, THE RISK THEY FACE LIVING IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE, OR THE NECESSARY STEPS TO REDUCE THEIR WILDFIRE RISK.

(II) THEREFORE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY DECLARES THAT IT IS VITAL TO THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF COLORADO'S CITIZENS, COMMUNITIES, AND FORESTS FOR LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL AGENCIES IN COLORADO, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGED IN WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION IN THE STATE, TO ENHANCE OUTREACH EFFORTS TO RESIDENTS IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE TO EDUCATE AND MOTIVATE THOSE RESIDENTS TO ENGAGE IN EFFECTIVE WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION AND WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS ACTIVITIES.

(b) (I) THE FOREST SERVICE SHALL CONVENE A WORKING GROUP OF LOCAL, STATE, AND FEDERAL PARTNERS ENGAGED IN WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION, REFERRED TO IN THIS SUBSECTION (9.5) AS THE "WORKING GROUP", TO ENHANCE OUTREACH EFFORTS TO RESIDENTS IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE CONCERNING EFFECTIVE WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION AND TO COORDINATE THE FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCES THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE FOR SUCH WORK. STATE AND FEDERAL PARTNERS INCLUDE THE DIVISION OF FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE. THE FOREST SERVICE MAY INVITE OTHER PARTNERS TO JOIN THE WORKING GROUP AND SEEK INPUT FROM ENTITIES ENGAGED IN WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.

(II) THE WORKING GROUP SHALL:

(A) PRIOR TO THE ANNUAL WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS IN 2023 AND 2024, CONSIDER HOW BEST TO CONDUCT AN ENHANCED OUTREACH CAMPAIGN FOR THE PUBLIC THAT EDUCATES AND MOTIVATES RESIDENTS IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE TO ENGAGE IN MORE WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION;

(B) CONSIDER HOW BEST TO DISTRIBUTE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND

INFORMATION TO RESIDENTS IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE, INCLUDING THE FOREST SERVICE'S PUBLICATION, "THE HOME IGNITION ZONE" OR A SUCCESSOR PUBLICATION, AND WHETHER OTHER EDUCATIONAL AND MARKETING TOOLS COULD BE DEVELOPED TO EDUCATE RESIDENTS AND MOTIVATE INCREASED WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION;

(C) CONSIDER WHICH LOCAL, STATEWIDE, OR REGIONAL OUTREACH EFFORTS, INCLUDING DIRECT MAIL, WEB-BASED MATERIAL, TELEPHONE OUTREACH, SOCIAL MEDIA, PRINT MEDIA, TELEVISION AND RADIO SPOTS, BILLBOARDS, AND COMMUNITY EVENTS, ARE MOST EFFECTIVE IN INCREASING AWARENESS AMONG THE TARGETED RESIDENTS IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION AND HOW TO PREPARE FOR WILDFIRES;

(D) CONSIDER HOW BEST TO COORDINATE EFFORTS BY WORKING GROUP PARTNERS AND OTHER ENTITIES ENGAGED IN WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION TO DISSEMINATE WEB-BASED EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION CONCERNING EFFECTIVE WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION AND WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS ACTIVITIES THROUGH LINKS TO THE FOREST SERVICE'S WEB-BASED CLEARINGHOUSE FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TO WEB-BASED RESOURCES OF OTHER WORKING GROUP PARTNERS AND ENTITIES ENGAGED IN WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION;

(E) CONSIDER HOW BEST TO LEVERAGE EXISTING STATE, LOCAL, AND FEDERAL RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE TO IMPLEMENT THE ENHANCED OUTREACH EFFORTS CONSIDERED BY THE WORKING GROUP; AND

(F) CONSIDER WHAT FUNDING OR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES WOULD BE NECESSARY FOR THE FOREST SERVICE AND OTHER PARTNERS TO BUILD UPON THE ENHANCED WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH OUTREACH CAMPAIGN, AS WELL AS OTHER POTENTIAL OUTREACH EFFORTS, IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS.

(c) AFTER CONSIDERING FEEDBACK FROM THE WORKING GROUP, AND SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS, THE FOREST SERVICE:

(I) SHALL IMPLEMENT AN ENHANCED WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH OUTREACH CAMPAIGN IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE DIVISION OF FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE IN 2023 AND 2024, AND, SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS, MAY IMPLEMENT ENHANCED WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH OUTREACH CAMPAIGNS IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS; AND

(II) MAY IMPLEMENT OTHER OUTREACH EFFORTS DURING THE 2022-23 AND 2023-24 STATE FISCAL YEARS AND SUBSEQUENT STATE FISCAL YEARS THAT ARE EXPECTED TO INCREASE AWARENESS OF WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION BY RESIDENTS IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.

(d) (I) TO IMPLEMENT THIS SUBSECTION (9.5), THE FOREST SERVICE, SUBJECT TO AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS, MAY:

(A) DEVELOP OR CONTRACT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OR PLACEMENT OF MARKETING AND EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, INCLUDING VIDEOS, DIRECT MAIL, SOCIAL MEDIA, PRINT MEDIA, TELEVISION AND RADIO SPOTS, AND BILLBOARDS;

(B) CONDUCT OR CONTRACT FOR EDUCATIONAL EVENTS TARGETED TO RESIDENTS IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE;

(C) RETAIN CONSULTANTS, AS NECESSARY, TO IMPLEMENT ALL OR PART OF AN OUTREACH CAMPAIGN, AS WELL AS OTHER OUTREACH EFFORTS;

(D) MAKE ENHANCEMENTS TO THE FOREST SERVICE'S WEB-BASED CLEARINGHOUSE FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND FUNDING RESOURCES CREATED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (9) OF THIS SECTION, AS NECESSARY, TO BETTER IMPLEMENT OUTREACH EFFORTS DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (9.5), AND COORDINATE WITH WORKING GROUP PARTNERS AND OTHER ENTITIES ENGAGED IN WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION TO PROVIDE LINKS TO WEB-BASED EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES AND INFORMATION; AND

(E) SECURE NECESSARY STAFF TO IMPLEMENT THE OUTREACH EFFORTS DESCRIBED IN THIS SUBSECTION (9.5).

(II) CONSISTENT WITH THE OUTREACH PLAN, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MAY APPROPRIATE MONEY TO THE DIVISION OF FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY.

(e) (I) DURING THE 2023 AND 2024 LEGISLATIVE INTERIMS, THE STATE FORESTER SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE WILDFIRE MATTERS REVIEW COMMITTEE CREATED IN SECTION 2-3-1602 CONCERNING OUTREACH EFFORTS IMPLEMENTED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (9.5).

(II) THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE:

(A) A DESCRIPTION OF THE OUTREACH EFFORTS;

(B) THE AMOUNT AND USE OF MONEY APPROPRIATED TO IMPLEMENT THIS SUBSECTION (9.5);

(C) DATA AND INFORMATION RECEIVED BY THE FOREST SERVICE OR ITS PARTNERS RELATING TO THE IMPACT OF THE OUTREACH EFFORTS IN INCREASING AWARENESS OF WILDFIRE RISK MITIGATION BY RESIDENTS IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE; AND

(D) PROPOSED FUTURE OUTREACH EFFORTS, INCLUDING ANY ADDITIONAL FUNDING OR OTHER RESOURCES NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT THOSE OUTREACH EFFORTS.

SECTION 2. Appropriation. For the 2022-23 state fiscal year, \$800,000 is appropriated to the healthy forests and vibrant communities fund created in section 23-31-313 (10), C.R.S. This appropriation is from the general fund. The department of higher education is responsible for the accounting related to this appropriation.

SECTION 3. Safety clause. The general assembly hereby finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety.

Approved: June 3, 2022