

Advisory Committee to the Director of the Division of Fire Prevention and Control  
on Wildland Fire and Prescribed Fire Matters (Advisory Committee)

Recommendations to the Colorado Legislature's Interim  
Committee on Wildfire Matters  
October 1, 2013

The recommendations of the Advisory Committee fall into two categories; those that are funding issues and do not require substantive legislation, and those that do require legislation.

The recommendations that require funding are as follows:

1. The Advisory Committee supports the Colorado State Fire Chiefs recommendation to fix the issues surrounding the State Digital Trunked Radio System (DTRS) and interoperable communications.
2. The State should fully implement a resource mobilization system that addresses the gap between local dispatching and the federal interagency dispatch system. The state mobilization system must interface with the national interagency dispatch system. {No additional funding required at this time}.
3. The State should sponsor (coordinate and fund) additional Incident Management Teams (IMTs) that can be rapidly deployed to an incident. To enhance availability, these IMTs would be comprised of qualified state and local members that are not already on teams that are part of the federal interagency system.
4. The Legislature should continue to fund mitigation grant programs and should increase funding for public education and outreach. However, the Legislature should require coordination of grant funds administered by state agencies (Colorado State Forest Service, Department of Natural Resources, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management) for mitigation to ensure that these funds are used in high-risk areas and in a way that will reduce the overall risk of wildfire.
5. The Legislature should adequately fund the wildland and prescribed fire responsibilities of the Division of Fire Prevention and Control and make an appropriation to the Wildfire Preparedness Fund for FY 14 and beyond.
6. The Legislature should make an appropriation to Colorado Firefighting Air Corps (C-FAC) Fund for the appropriate mix of firefighting aircraft to fill the gap between what is needed on wildland fires in Colorado and what the federal interagency system will provide, based on the report of the efficacy of the C-FAC to be presented later.

7. The State should increase the availability of basic wildland fire training and structural protection training for urban firefighters and provide wildland PPE and shelters to those that may be deployed by the state outside of their jurisdictions on wildland fires.

The recommendations that require substantive legislation are as follows:

1. The State should provide Accidental Death and Disability Coverage for Seasonal Firefighting Employees of Local Governments that may be deployed by the state outside of their jurisdictions on wildland fires.
2. Counties should be granted the statutory authority to prohibit open burning, including agricultural burns during high fire danger (Red Flag Days) and to prohibit the sale and use of fireworks during high fire danger.
3. The Legislature should require immunity of public agencies against liability arising from or attributable to insurance companies' wildfire mitigation activities on its insured properties lying within wildfire evacuation areas.
4. The Interim Committee carry legislation to clean up definitional issues in SB13-083, primarily with the use of the term "Certified Prescribed Burn Manager" when the term "Certified Burner" should have been used.