

SENATE FILE NO. SF0152

Wildfire management-task force and state forester.

Sponsored by: Senator(s) Barlow, Boner, Crago, Driskill and
Smith, D and Representative(s) Angelos,
Byron, Connolly, Haroldson, Williams and
Winter

A BILL

for

1 AN ACT relating to state lands; amending the duties of the
2 state forester; creating the wildfire management task
3 force; specifying members, duties and duration of the task
4 force; requiring reports; providing appropriations;
5 providing for the transfer of funds; authorizing borrowing;
6 repealing prior borrowing authorizations; and providing for
7 an effective date.

8

9 *Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:*

10

11 **Section 1.** W.S. 36-2-108(a), (b)(viii) and by
12 creating new paragraphs (ix) through (xi) is amended to
13 read:

14

1 **36-2-108. Appointment of state forester;**
2 **qualifications; duties.**

3
4 (a) The state board of land commissioners shall
5 appoint a state forester who shall be the administrative
6 head of the Wyoming state forestry division of the office
7 of state lands and investments. He shall serve at the
8 pleasure of the board. He shall have a bachelor's degree in
9 forestry with not less than four (4) years experience in
10 professional forestry work. The state forester shall, under
11 the general supervision of the board, have direction of all
12 forest interest and all matters pertaining to forestry
13 within the jurisdiction of the state of Wyoming. ~~;~~ ~~and may,~~
14 ~~with approval of the board, appoint such assistants and~~
15 ~~employees as are necessary in executing the duties of his~~
16 ~~office.~~

17
18 (b) The state forester shall:

19
20 (viii) Cooperate with federal agencies and all
21 political subdivision of the state to fulfill the intent of
22 this section. ~~;~~

23

1 (ix) Adopt rules as necessary to fulfill the
2 duties described in this article;

3
4 (x) Appoint assistants and employees as are
5 necessary in executing the duties of the division;

6
7 (xi) Maintain wildland and forestry fire control
8 programs including, but not limited to:

9
10 (A) Fire management, coordination and
11 reimbursement for all lands owned and managed by the state
12 of Wyoming and its agencies;

13
14 (B) Fire management assistance within the
15 state of Wyoming;

16
17 (C) Pre-position suppression equipment,
18 personnel and other resources during periods of high
19 wildfire risk;

20
21 (D) Support for local fire jurisdiction
22 training programs;

23

1 (E) Establishing standards and regulations
2 for privately contracted private wildland fire resources
3 operating in Wyoming. As used in this subparagraph,
4 "privately contracted private fire resources" includes
5 services retained by insurers for prevention and
6 suppression activities on insured properties.

7
8 **Section 2.**

9
10 (a) There is created the wildfire management task
11 force to consist of the following members:

12
13 (i) Members of the legislature as follows:

14
15 (A) Two (2) members of the Wyoming house of
16 representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house. The
17 speaker of the house shall designate one (1) of the members
18 appointed under this subparagraph to be co-chairman of the
19 task force;

20
21 (B) Two (2) members of the Wyoming senate,
22 appointed by the president of the senate. The president of
23 the senate shall designate one (1) of the members appointed

1 under this subparagraph to be co-chairman of the task
2 force.

3

4 (ii) Members and officials of the Wyoming state
5 government as follows:

6

7 (A) The governor or the governor's
8 designee;

9

10 (B) The president of the Wyoming fire
11 advisory board or the president's designee;

12

13 (C) The Wyoming state forester or the
14 forester's designee;

15

16 (D) The state insurance commissioner or the
17 commissioner's designee.

18

19 (iii) Other members appointed by the governor as
20 follows:

21

22 (A) One (1) member representing Wyoming
23 local governments;

1

2 (B) One (1) member representing the
3 agriculture industry;

4

5 (C) One (1) member at large with wildland
6 fire subject matter expertise.

7

8 (b) The task force shall:

9

10 (i) Study the wildfire impacts to private and
11 state lands, state agencies, local fire jurisdictions,
12 individuals and communities;

13

14 (ii) Identify and evaluate wildland fire
15 response systems, including but not limited to, funding,
16 suppression, training, coordination, prevention,
17 mobilization, cooperative agreements and other related
18 programs;

19

20 (iii) Not later than October 1, 2025, report to
21 the governor, the joint agriculture, state and public lands
22 and water resources interim committee and the joint
23 appropriations committee on the work of the task force

1 including any recommendations for legislation for
2 consideration by an appropriate legislative committee.

3

4 (c) The task force shall be staffed by the
5 legislative service office.

6

7 (d) The legislative members of the task force shall
8 receive salary, per diem and travel expenses in the manner
9 and amount prescribed by W.S. 28-5-101. Task force members
10 representing Wyoming state government shall be considered
11 to be acting within the scope of regular employment when
12 conducting the official business of the task force and
13 shall receive their regular pay without additional
14 compensation, except that those members shall receive
15 mileage and per diem as provided for other members of the
16 task force under this subsection if the members are not
17 reimbursed by their employer. All other members of the task
18 force shall not receive salary but shall receive per diem
19 and mileage in the amount provided for members of the
20 legislature under W.S. 28-5-101 when conducting the
21 official business of the task force.

22

1 (e) The task force shall terminate on December 31,
2 2026.

3
4 (f) There is appropriated twenty-five thousand
5 dollars (\$25,000.00) from the general fund to the
6 legislative service office for purposes of providing
7 salary, mileage and per diem to the legislative members of
8 the task force appointed under this section and for other
9 expenses of the task force. This appropriation shall be for
10 the period beginning with the effective date of this act
11 and ending June 30, 2027. This appropriation shall not be
12 transferred or expended for any other purpose and any
13 unexpended, unobligated funds remaining from this
14 appropriation shall revert as provided by law on June 30,
15 2027.

16
17 (g) There is appropriated twenty-five thousand
18 dollars (\$25,000.00) from the general fund to the office of
19 the governor for purposes of providing mileage and per diem
20 to the nonlegislative members of the task force. This
21 appropriation shall be for the period beginning with the
22 effective date of this act and ending June 30, 2027. This
23 appropriation shall not be transferred or expended for any

1 other purpose and any unexpended, unobligated funds
2 remaining from this appropriation shall revert as provided
3 by law on June 30, 2027.

4

5 **Section 3.**

6

7 (a) There is appropriated from the general fund for
8 the purpose of restoring funds expended by the state of
9 Wyoming to suppress wildfires that occurred in calendar
10 year 2024 the following amounts for the following programs
11 or purposes:

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13 (i) One million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) for the
14 special contingency division of the office of the governor,
15 unit 0601;

16

17 (ii) One million two hundred sixty-three
18 thousand nine hundred sixty-six dollars (\$1,263,966.00) for
19 the disaster contingency unit within the homeland security
20 division of the office of the governor, unit 1106;

21

1 (iii) Twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000.00) to
2 the emergency fire suppression account within the office of
3 state lands and investments.

4

5 (b) There is appropriated from the general fund up to
6 twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000.00), or as much thereof
7 as is necessary, to be deposited by the state auditor in
8 the legislative stabilization reserve account for repayment
9 of funds borrowed on or before June 30, 2025 from the
10 legislative stabilization reserve account under 2024
11 Wyoming session laws, chapter 118, section 301(b).

12

13 (c) Funds appropriated in this section shall not be
14 transferred or expended for any other purpose.
15 Notwithstanding W.S. 9-2-1008, 9-2-1012(e) and 9-4-207,
16 funds appropriated in this section shall not lapse at the
17 end of any fiscal period. Any unexpended, unobligated funds
18 at the end of any fiscal period shall remain in the account
19 to which the funds were appropriated and be expended for
20 the purposes specified by this section, except as otherwise
21 provided by further legislative authorization.

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