



SB11-238 Extension of Wildfire Preparedness Fund

Summary

The Wildlife Preparedness Fund was created in 2006 by Senate Bill 06-096, It authorized funding for wildfire preparedness through FY 2010-11. SB11-238 extends the Wildfire Preparedness Fund for two years, beginning on July 1, 2012. Funding is provided through federal mineral lease revenues by the Department of Local Affairs from the Local Government Impact Fund. The Wildfire Preparedness Fund is used by the Colorado State Forest Service for wildfire preparedness activities, including funding for firefighting resources, agreements, and plans. The bill also requires the Colorado State Forest Service to annually report on the use of these revenues to the Department of Local Affairs, the Office of State Planning and Budgeting, and the General Assembly.

Talking Points

- Wildfires do not respect political boundaries and response to wildfire does not just happen. To be efficient and effective, it is imperative to prepare for wildfire response in advance of a fire. Wildfire response in Colorado requires all levels of government to be informed in order to assist each other across jurisdictional boundaries when wildfires are reported. Developing, maintaining, and sustaining interagency cross-boundary cooperation is a function of wildfire preparedness.
- Multi-year funding promotes consistency and continuity in developing, maintaining, and sustaining interagency cross-boundary cooperation among fire departments, counties, and state and federal agencies. Multi-year funding allows for investment in long-term training, equipment procurement, and negotiating cooperative agreements.
- Within the 64 Colorado counties, 250 Fire Protection Districts and more than 400 fire departments and sheriffs offices have wildland fire response resources; 43 counties participate in the Emergency Fire Fund.
- The Wildfire Preparedness Fund allows the Colorado State Forest Service to provide the structure and framework for cooperation among all levels of government. This is accomplished through cooperative agreements, MOUs, and operating plans facilitated and/or administered by the CSFS.
- The Wildfire Preparedness Fund also allows the CSFS to make such resources as air tankers and wildland engines available – resources that might not be available without the fund. This is accomplished through exclusive-use contracts and staffing wildland engines year-round.

- The Wildfire Preparedness Fund provides consistency in funding over time, allowing for efficiencies in initial attack, contracting for resources, technical assistance and operational support.
- Preparedness for wildland fire in Colorado is a cooperative endeavor of local, county, state, federal, and tribal entities. Each entity brings resources and skills that complement each other and allow for successful suppression of incidents that no single entity alone could handle.