

SENATE BILL NO. 75

INTRODUCED BY R. LAIBLE

BY REQUEST OF THE FIRE SUPPRESSION COMMITTEE

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT INCLUDING HOMEOWNER RESPONSIBILITY IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE AMONG THE FINDINGS OF THE STATE FIRE POLICY; AMENDING SECTION 76-13-115, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

Section 1. Section 76-13-115, MCA, is amended to read:

"76-13-115. State fire policy. The legislature finds and declares that:

(1) the safety of the public and of firefighters is paramount in all wildfire suppression activities;

(2) it is a priority to minimize property and resource loss resulting from wildfire and to minimize expense to Montana taxpayers, which is generally accomplished through an aggressive and rapid initial attack effort;

(3) interagency cooperation and coordination among local, state, and federal agencies are intended and encouraged, including cooperation when restricting activity or closing areas to access becomes necessary;

(4) fire prevention, hazard reduction, and loss mitigation are fundamental components of this policy;

(5) all property in Montana has wildfire protection from a recognized fire protection entity;

(6) all private property owners and federal and state public land management agencies have a responsibility to manage resources, mitigate fire hazards, and otherwise prevent fires on their property;

(7) sound forest management activities to reduce fire risk, such as thinning, prescribed burning, and insect and disease treatments, improve the overall diversity and vigor of forested landscapes and improve the condition of related water, wildlife, recreation, and aesthetic resources; ~~and~~

(8) development of fire protection guidelines for the wildland-urban interface is critical to improving public safety and for reducing risk and loss; and

(9) homeowners in the wildland-urban interface are responsible for maintaining their homes and surrounding property in ways that will reduce extreme fire behavior and the potential for ignition of their homes and structures."

