

HJR 30 Fire Suppression

Poll ranking: #5
Pg. 5 in Draft Work Plan

Study Requirements cont. ...

- examine the impact of climate change on forest lands; and
- examine any other aspect of wildland fire suppression and land management that the interim committee determines to be appropriate.

Study Requirements

- Analyze whether and how each of the recommendations made by the Fire Suppression Committee established by Chapter 1, Special Laws of September 2007, in its 2008 report to the 61st Legislature has been implemented and which of those recommendations should be amended or reinforced;
- examine additional needs of local and state fire suppression entities;
- further investigate state and federal forest management policies, including how those policies may contribute to an increased number of wildfires, greater safety risk to firefighters and the public, and compromised effectiveness of fire suppression efforts, and avenues the Legislature may pursue to effect changes in those policies;

Issues & Challenges



- Increasing duration and intensity of wildland fire seasons;
- Increasing costs to state/taxpayers;
- Increasing development in wildland-urban interface areas;
- need to coordinate wildland fire and land management policies among federal, state, and local jurisdictions.

Background

The Price of Flame

Final Report
of the
Fire Suppression Interim Committee



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- Special session called in September 2007 to appropriate state's share of fire costs from 2007 fire season – over \$40 million.
- The amount was twice the average amount calculated over a 7-year period.
- The Fire Suppression Committee was established to examine reasons for high costs and possible mitigation strategies.

Background cont. ...

- HJR 30 seeks to follow up on the Fire Suppression Committee's work, which the final report categorizes into the following subject areas:
 - Wildland-urban interface: land use planning, insurance, building standards;
 - Funding for fire protection, suppression, fuel treatment;
 - Federal forest and wildfire policy – state/federal/local relations;
 - Local government; volunteer firefighters
 - Wood products infrastructure;
 - Contracting; and
 - A miscellaneous catch-all category.

Background cont. ...

- The Committee met monthly for a year, received extensive public comment, traveled to seven communities, issued dozens of conclusions and recommendations, and requested numerous bills.
- The 61st Legislature enacted 10 bills requested by the Fire Suppression Committee.
- Many of the Committee's recommendations did not take the form of legislation; rather were related to DNRC's budget or aimed at federal, state, and local government agencies, property owners, and business interests.

Primary Agencies/Entities Generally Involved in Fire Suppression

- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- Montana Department of Military Affairs (Disaster and Emergency Services)
- United States Forest Service
- United States Bureau of Land Management
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service
- The Bureau of Indian Affairs
- The National Park Service
- Local fire departments and local law enforcement
- County commissions

Study Options

Options for study range from providing extensive background information, analyzing each recommendation of the Fire Suppression Committee, and providing ongoing analysis of DNRC's fire budget to selecting a certain number of recommendations and providing brief updates to the EQC.



Details are on page 5 of the Draft Work Plan.

Questions for staff?