

SENATE BILL NO. 281

INTRODUCED BY C. VINCENT

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT REVISING USE OF FIRE SUPPRESSION ACCOUNT FUNDS; REQUIRING EXPENDITURES FOR CERTAIN FIRE EXPENDITURES IF THE ACCOUNT BALANCE EXCEEDS \$40 MILLION; ADDING ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES; AMENDING SECTION 76-13-150, MCA."

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

**Section 1.** Section 76-13-150, MCA, is amended to read:

**"76-13-150. Fire suppression account -- fund transfer.** (1) There is a fire suppression account in the state special revenue fund to the credit of the department.

(2) The legislature may transfer money from other funds to the account, and the money in the account is subject to legislative fund transfers.

(3) Funds received for restitution by private parties must be deposited in the account.

(4) Money in the account may be used only for: ~~the purpose of paying expenses for fire prevention, including fuel reduction and mitigation, forest restoration, grants for the purchase of fire suppression equipment for county cooperatives, and~~

(a) fire suppression costs;

(b) fuel reduction and mitigation;

(c) forest restoration;

(d) the purchase of fire suppression equipment;

(e) forest management projects on federal land;

(f) prescribed fires on state and private land;

(g) support for collaborative groups that include at least one representative of a county commission that is engaged with a federal forest project;

(h) road maintenance on federal lands; and

(i) litigation support for local governments related to federal forest projects.

(5) Interest earned on the balance of the account is retained in the account.

(6) Except as provided in subsections (7) and (8), by August 15 following the end of each fiscal year, an

1 amount equal to the balance of unexpended and unencumbered general fund money appropriated in excess of  
2 0.5% of the total general fund money appropriated for that fiscal year must be transferred by the state treasurer  
3 from the general fund to the fire suppression account. General fund appropriations that continue from a fiscal year  
4 to the next fiscal year and any general fund appropriations made pursuant to 10-3-310 or 10-3-312 are excluded  
5 from the calculation.

6 (7) The provisions of subsection (6) do not apply in a fiscal year in which reductions required by 17-7-140  
7 occur or if a transfer pursuant to subsection (6) would require reductions pursuant to 17-7-140.

8 (8) The fund balance in the account may not exceed \$100 million.

9 ~~Up to \$5 million each biennium may be used for the purpose of fuel reduction and mitigation and~~  
10 ~~forest restoration~~ On July 1 at the end of each odd-numbered fiscal year, if the balance in the account exceeds  
11 \$40 million, \$5 million in the account must be used for the purposes in subsections (4)(b) through (4)(h).

12 (10) Money in the account is statutorily appropriated, as provided in 17-7-502, to the department for the  
13 purposes described in subsection (4)."

14 - END -