

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15(CRA) am S

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Amended: 5/9/25

Offered: 4/9/25

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES HOLLAND, Coulombe, Fields, Schrage, Kopp, Elam, Bynum, Nelson, Mears, Josephson, Story, Gray

SENATORS Kaufman, Wielechowski, Hughes, Merrick, Bjorkman, Kawasaki, Yundt

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the Governor, the Department of Natural Resources, division of forestry and fire**
2 **protection, the Department of Public Safety, municipalities of the state and relevant**
3 **wildfire planning and response agencies, and the Alaska delegation in Congress to**
4 **prepare for the 2025 wildfire season.**

5 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

6 **WHEREAS** the frequency and severity of wildfires in the state is increasing because
7 of the effects of lower precipitation and rising temperatures, leading to prolonged fire seasons;
8 and

9 **WHEREAS** the 2025 wildfire season presents an increased risk to communities in
10 wildland-urban interface areas, including Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kenai, Soldotna, Southeast
11 Alaska, and other high-risk zones across the state, some of which have never experienced
12 wildfires and which contain dangerous fuel loads; and

13 **WHEREAS** limited water sources, difficult terrain, and constrained or single-access
14 routes to large residential areas in many communities pose significant challenges to ground-
15 based firefighting and evacuation efforts; and

1 **WHEREAS** the costs of fighting a widespread fire increase significantly when crews
 2 must be brought in from out of state, and providing quick, effective, locally sourced fire
 3 suppression reduces costs for firefighting and reduces economic losses caused by a fire; and

4 **WHEREAS** there is community concern about sufficient aerial firefighting resources,
 5 sufficient water reservoirs for bucket operations, and adoption of enhanced early detection of
 6 wildfires and warning systems to support rapid response; and

7 **WHEREAS** community safety and preparedness can be improved with early and
 8 broad public outreach by engaging the public to learn about wildfires and take action through
 9 programs like the Ready, Set, Go! Program, the Firewise USA program, and other local and
 10 neighborhood programs, and to conduct evacuation planning and drills with local fire stations
 11 and other response agencies; and

12 **WHEREAS** the role of local and state public information officers, in collaboration
 13 with state and federal agencies, is to actively coordinate public education campaigns, enhance
 14 emergency notifications, and facilitate communication between fire response agencies and the
 15 public; and

16 **WHEREAS** past legislative efforts have underscored the importance of wildfire
 17 mitigation funding, including appropriations granted for wildfire fuel reduction programs,
 18 defensible space and fuel break initiatives, and support for local fire departments in high-risk
 19 areas;

20 **BE IT RESOLVED** that, in preparation for the 2025 wildfire season, the Alaska State
 21 Legislature urges the Governor, the Department of Natural Resources, division of forestry and
 22 fire protection, and relevant municipal and local agencies to enhance wildfire preparedness
 23 and response coordination by reviewing and developing comprehensive interagency wildfire
 24 response plans specific to high-risk wildland-urban interface communities, with special
 25 attention to single-access routes to isolated residential populations, by minimizing hazard
 26 trees and reducing sources of fuel for wildfires, including evaluating and removing fuel in
 27 rights-of-way and removing intersection obstructions, and by repairing roads that are in poor
 28 condition to enable use of the roadways to support wildfire response and safe evacuations;
 29 and be it

30 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that, in preparation for the 2025 wildfire season, the Alaska
 31 State Legislature urges local and state public information officers, in collaboration with state

1 and federal agencies, to assist and encourage all residents to learn about the potential for
 2 wildfires and changing exposure in their community, including areas designated as wildland-
 3 urban interface areas, and to urge residents to learn about and take action to protect their
 4 homes and property through home defense programs including the Firewise USA program,
 5 and to be prepared for evacuation using the Ready, Set, Go! program, and learn about and
 6 enroll in local notification and emergency news sources; and be it

7 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that, in preparation for the 2025 wildfire season, the Alaska
 8 State Legislature urges the Governor, the Department of Natural Resources, division of
 9 forestry and fire protection, and relevant municipal and local agencies to conduct emergency
 10 response and evacuation drills and to model evacuation scenarios, including planning for the
 11 possibility of single-access road closures, emergency vehicle congestion, and multiple fires
 12 resulting from ember transport downwind; and be it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that, in preparation for the 2025 wildfire season, the Alaska
 14 State Legislature urges the Governor, the Department of Natural Resources, division of
 15 forestry and fire protection, and relevant municipal and local agencies to bolster fire
 16 suppression resources by stationing ground and aerial firefighting assets close to high-risk
 17 areas during peak fire seasons and enhancing access to water sources for bucket and hose
 18 operations in areas with limited local water supplies; and be it

19 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that, in preparation for the 2025 wildfire season, the Alaska
 20 State Legislature urges the Governor, the Department of Natural Resources division of
 21 forestry and fire protection, and relevant municipal and local agencies to improve fire
 22 detection and early warning systems by implementing advanced fire detection technology to
 23 improve response times and situational awareness and conducting community-wide tests of
 24 emergency notification systems to ensure reliability in crisis situations; and be it

25 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges federal
 26 representatives, including the Alaska delegation in Congress, to advocate for increased federal
 27 funding and support for the state's wildfire prevention and mitigation efforts.

28 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Michael Dunleavy,
 29 Governor of the State of Alaska; the Honorable John Boyle, Commissioner, Department of
 30 Natural Resources; the Honorable James Cockrell, Commissioner, Department of Public
 31 Safety; the Honorable Suzanne LaFrance, Mayor of the Municipality of Anchorage; the

1 Honorable Alvin Osterback, Mayor of the Aleutians East Borough; the Honorable David R.
 2 Lax, Mayor of the Bristol Bay Borough; the Honorable Christopher Noel, Mayor of the
 3 Denali Borough; the Honorable Grier Hopkins, Mayor of the Fairbanks North Star Borough;
 4 the Honorable Tom Morphet, Mayor of the Haines Borough; the Honorable Beth Weldon,
 5 Mayor of the City and Borough of Juneau; the Honorable Peter Micciche, Mayor of the Kenai
 6 Peninsula Borough; the Honorable Rodney Dial, Mayor of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough;
 7 the Honorable Scott Arndt, Mayor of the Kodiak Island Borough; the Honorable Glen
 8 Alsworth, Sr., Mayor of the Lake and Peninsula Borough; the Honorable Edna DeVries,
 9 Mayor of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough; the Honorable Josiah Patkotak, Mayor of the
 10 North Slope Borough; the Honorable Dickie Moto, Sr., Mayor of the Northwest Arctic
 11 Borough; the Honorable Mark Jensen, Mayor of the Petersburg Borough; the Honorable
 12 Steven Eisenbeisz, Mayor of the City and Borough of Sitka; the Honorable Sam Bass, Mayor
 13 of the Municipality of Skagway; the Honorable Patty Gilbert, Mayor of the City and Borough
 14 of Wrangell; the Honorable Cindy L. Bremner, Mayor of the City and Borough of Yakutat;
 15 the Honorable Glenda D. Ledford, Mayor of the City of Wasilla; the Honorable Steve
 16 Carrington, Mayor of the City of Palmer; the Honorable David Pruhs, Mayor of the City of
 17 Fairbanks; the Honorable Igor Zaremba, Mayor of the City of Delta Junction; the Honorable
 18 Brian Gabriel, Mayor of the City of Kenai; the Honorable Paul Whitney, Mayor of the City of
 19 Soldotna; Doug Schrage, Fire Chief, Anchorage Fire Department; Chad VanOrmer, Regional
 20 Forester, Alaska Region, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and the Honorable
 21 Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Nicholas
 22 Begich, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.