

CS FOR HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15(CRA)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Offered: 4/9/25

Referred: Rules

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

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 Glenda D. Ledford, Mayor of the City of Wasilla; the Honorable Steve Carrington,
2 Mayor of the City of Palmer; the Honorable David Pruhs, Mayor of the City of Fairbanks; the
3 Honorable Grier Hopkins, Mayor of the Fairbanks North Star Borough; the Honorable Brian
4 Gabriel, Mayor of the City of Kenai; the Honorable Paul Whitney, Mayor of the City of
5 Soldotna; the Honorable Peter Micciche, Mayor of the Kenai Peninsula Borough; Doug
6 Schrage, Fire Chief, Anchorage Fire Department; Chad VanOrmer, Regional Forester, Alaska
7 Region, Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski
8 and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Nicholas Begich, U.S.
9 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.