
HOUSE BILL 1941

State of Washington

66th Legislature

2019 Regular Session

By Representatives Kretz and Blake

1 AN ACT Relating to conducting a comprehensive review of the
2 impact of catastrophic wildfires on communities as a means of
3 improving government responses for the future; creating new sections;
4 and providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** Catastrophic wildfires have inflicted
7 extraordinary levels of pain, loss, and devastation on Washington's
8 communities. Although the economic costs of fighting these wildfires
9 are comparatively easy to describe, the overall impact that these
10 wildfires have on affected communities is much harder to quantify. In
11 order to more fully understand the true impact of wildfires, and in
12 order to better plan for community response to future wildfires, the
13 legislature requires the completion of a comprehensive analysis of
14 communities that have experienced catastrophic wildfires. This
15 analysis should represent a broad-based exploration of the entire
16 wildfire, from the moment of initial response to the lingering
17 effects felt years into the future.

18 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 2.** (1) The department of natural resources
19 and Washington State University, in consultation with the state fire
20 marshal, the department of health, the military department, the

1 department of social and health services, the department of ecology,
2 the department of revenue, the office of the superintendent of public
3 instruction, the department of commerce, applicable fire protection
4 service agencies and fire protection jurisdictions, applicable
5 conservation districts, and other appropriate agencies, shall
6 complete a comprehensive study of the impacts to affected communities
7 as a result of the 2014 Carlton complex and 2015 Okanogan complex
8 wildfires.

9 (2) The study must address, at a minimum, the following
10 categories of costs, impacts, and effects:

11 (a) Health impacts, rates of respiratory illnesses, the extent of
12 disproportionate mental health impacts, and impacts on vulnerable
13 populations, such as children, the elderly, and disabled persons;

14 (b) Health care services, including emergency medical services
15 and hospital services and programs;

16 (c) Impacts to housing, including housing availability, housing
17 affordability, and supplies of farmworker housing;

18 (d) Aid relief and evacuation services, including those provided
19 by governmental and nongovernmental organizations;

20 (e) Immediate road, infrastructure, and landscape stabilization;

21 (f) Fire suppression activities by all participants in the fire-
22 suppression effort;

23 (g) Infrastructure repair, including repairs to roads, power
24 lines, railroads, gas lines, water and sewer lines, and irrigation
25 canals;

26 (h) Long-term landscape rehabilitation, including soil
27 rehabilitation and erosion response, watershed restoration projects,
28 and flood damage mitigation;

29 (i) Impacts on commercial activities, including natural resource,
30 agricultural, service, hospitality, industrial, and retail
31 businesses;

32 (j) Changes in insurance premiums and the availability of
33 insurance coverage;

34 (k) Changes to health care services and costs;

35 (l) Property losses, including homes, businesses, crops, and
36 timber;

37 (m) Impacts to animals, including pets, livestock, wildlife, and
38 fish, including threatened and endangered species;

39 (n) Hydrologic impacts, including flooding, landslides, damages
40 to infrastructure, alteration of hydrologic regime, impacts to

1 instream flows, impacts to water storage capacity, and increased
2 water treatment requirements;

3 (o) Impacts to trust beneficiaries resulting from the loss of
4 timber on state lands and state forestlands;

5 (p) Impacts to recreation;

6 (q) Educational impacts;

7 (r) Impacts to cultural resources, including damage to and loss
8 of archaeological sites;

9 (s) Impacts to state and local revenues, including changes in
10 property, sales, and business taxes; and

11 (t) Greenhouse gas emissions, including the social cost of carbon
12 associated with such emissions.

13 (3) The comprehensive impacts analysis must be completed by
14 September 1, 2020. Upon completion, the study must, in accordance
15 with RCW 43.01.036, be submitted to the standing committees of the
16 house of representatives and the senate with jurisdiction over
17 wildland firefighting. A preliminary draft of the study must, in
18 accordance with RCW 43.01.036, be submitted to the standing
19 committees of the house of representatives and the senate with
20 jurisdiction over wildland firefighting by November 1, 2019.

21 (4) This section expires June 30, 2021.

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