



HB 2413

# THE NEED FOR DEDICATED WILDFIRE AND FOREST HEALTH FUNDING

DNR's plan for dedicated funding is a simple, affordable, and common-sense solution to Washington's wildfire crisis. This proposal reduces wildfire damage and cost by investing in proven wildfire prevention and preparedness strategies.



**Endorsed by:**

- Washington Association of Fire Chiefs
- Washington State Council of Firefighters
- American Lung Association
- The Nature Conservancy
- Washington Building & Construction Trades Council
- OneAmerica

**EVERY \$1 SPENT RESTORING THE HEALTH OF FORESTS SAVES \$1.45 IN FIREFIGHTING COSTS.<sup>2</sup>**

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## We are all at risk from wildfire

Wildfire poses a clear and present danger to our health and safety, economy, and way of life. More than 2.2 million homes in Washington are exposed to heightened wildfire risk.

**Wildfire suppression costs statewide averaged \$153 million<sup>1</sup> per year over the past five years.**

If we do not act, wildfire danger will continue to increase.

## A blueprint for tackling our wildfire crisis

This plan invests \$125 million each biennium toward:

1. Improving our state's wildfire response capability; and,
2. Restoring natural wildfire resistance in our forests.

This proactive approach responds to the rise of severe fires by providing firefighters with the helicopters, equipment, and training they need to get to fires early and keep them small.

And it invests in longer-term efforts to prevent wildfires in the first place—restoring the health of 1.25 million acres of forest via selective thinning and prescribed burns.

Funding will implement the science-based strategies laid out in the 20-Year Forest Health Strategic Plan and the 10-Year Wildland Fire Protection Strategic Plan, both of which had broad support from the public, landowners, fire agencies, tribes and members of the Legislature during their development.

## An affordable, common-sense funding source

This plan is funded by a surcharge of a few cents on property and casualty insurance policies, which have a clear nexus to the danger wildfire poses to our homes and communities. This revenue will be deposited into a new dedicated account.

By sharing the burden of tackling our wildfire crisis across everyone, we minimize the impact on each resident. **For the average household (one homeowner's policy and two auto policies), the cost will be just over \$1 per month.**

<sup>1</sup> \$153 MILLION PER YEAR INCLUDES ALL JURISDICTIONS.  
<sup>2</sup> OREGON FEDERAL FOREST ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

**FIRE  
SUPPRESSION  
STATEWIDE  
COSTS \$153  
MILLION EACH  
YEAR.**

**2.2**   
**MILLION**

Number of homes in  
Washington exposed to  
wildfire.\*

\* USFS PACIFIC NORTHWEST QUANTITATIVE  
WILDFIRE RISK ASSESSMENT

**Endorsed by:**

- Climate Alliance for Jobs and Clean Energy
- Front and Centered
- Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians
- The Trust for Public Land
- Washington Association of Land Trusts
- The Lands Council
- Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
- Washington State Patrol
- Washington Physicians for Social Responsibility
- Forterra

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**FUNDING PRIORITIES, GUIDED BY DNR'S 10-YEAR  
WILDLAND FIRE PROTECTION STRATEGIC PLAN, INCLUDE:**



**42** New Full-time  
Firefighters  
**\$8.4 million**



**15** Fire Engine  
Leaders  
**\$5.2 million**



**100** New Cameras In Key  
Locations to Detect Fires  
Early and Put Them Out  
Quicker (Advanced Early  
Detection Systems)  
**\$4.5 million**

- Improving our wildfire fighting force: firefighters, fire engines, helicopters, modern equipment and technology  
**\$20 million/biennium ongoing (\$30.1 million FY21)**
- Restore the health of our forests through treatments that include prescribed burning and thinning  
**\$39 million/biennium ongoing costs (\$12 million FY21)**
- Making investments to improve the resiliency of communities and landscapes  
**\$19.1 million/biennium ongoing (\$7 million FY21)**
- Grants to local fire districts that are often the first ones to respond to wildfire  
**\$40 million over the next 5 years (\$9 million FY21)**

**Preventing losses from wildfires while  
building economic opportunity**

When it comes to wildfire, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

The benefits far exceed just reduced wildfire suppression costs. That's because suppression costs make up only 9 percent of the total cost of wildfires once you factor in disaster recovery, lost business, infrastructure and timber damage, and health impacts.<sup>3</sup>

By making these proactive investments in forest health, we also create new economic opportunities that lead to family wage jobs, especially in rural communities.

Two cross-laminated timber facilities have opened this year (Colville and Spokane Valley). These facilities take timber thinned from unhealthy forests and turn it into sturdy, environmentally friendly building material for our towns and cities.

**Protecting the health of people and wildlife**

A focus on forest health also supports fish and wildlife by protecting and improving habitat. Healthy forests mean clean water and clean air.

Wildfires are a significant source of carbon pollution. Less wildfires mean less air pollution. This protects public health, in addition to keeping our blue skies clear of choking smoke.

<sup>3</sup> HEADWATERS ECONOMICS FULL COMMUNITY COSTS OF WILDFIRE