

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Item 39: Department of Transportation Wildfire Debris Removal

To: Ways and Means Full Committee
From: Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee
Carrier: Representative Gomberg

The Transportation and Economic Development Subcommittee recommends that the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means recommend including an increase of \$25,000,000 General Fund for the Department of Transportation in a budget reconciliation bill during the 2022 legislative session to continue ash and debris removal activities necessary as a result of the September 2020 wildfire season.

Expenditures for cleanup activities have not followed originally anticipated schedules. Instead of most payments being made in 2019-21 as anticipated, only \$38.4 million of the total appropriation of \$93.75 million for that biennium was expended, due to delays in contracting for certain aspects of the work. This recommendation will augment the \$14.4 million in General Fund appropriated for these activities in the current biennium. General Fund supports costs not eligible to be paid from State Highway Funds, including a 25% matching requirement for Federal Emergency Management Agency funds and private property debris removal activities.

The Subcommittee recommends approval.