

SUBCOMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Item 21: Department of Forestry 2023 Fire Season

To: Ways and Means Full Committee
From: Natural Resources Subcommittee
Carrier: Senator Dembrow

The Natural Resources Subcommittee recommends that the Joint Interim Committee on Ways and Means acknowledge the receipt of a report from the Department of Forestry on the 2023 fire season, and a preliminary report on private losses of timber, building, fencing, livestock, and grazing land capacity.

The report provides an overview of the details and progress of the 2023 fire season, which lasted from early June through October 18th. Statistics in the report indicate this year's season aligns very closely to the 10-year average number of fires on Department of Forestry-protected lands, while the number of protected acres burned is only 14% of the 10-year average.

Gross fire costs are estimated at \$73.8 million. After subtracting anticipated federal grants, reimbursements, and local fire district costs, the state's net emergency fire costs are estimated at \$24 million. The agency anticipates requesting additional funding during the 2024 legislative session.

Wildfires of 1,000 acres or more consumed 11,165 public and privately-owned acres, 9,028 of which were timberland. Additionally, 48 inhabited structures and 69 outbuildings were destroyed. The damage and losses are estimated at \$24.7 million.

The Natural Resources Subcommittee recommends approval.