

FISCAL NOTE

The fiscal impact is indeterminable due to an unknown number of potential wildfires. The financial impact would be dependent on the number and size of any fires that escaped off of private land. This could be minimal to extremely expensive depending on circumstances surrounding these potential fires.

Source of Expenditure Increase:

Increase in both Initial Attack and Extended Attack due to an increase in fire ignitions in times of high fire danger.

Assumptions:

Over the last five years Wyoming has seen an average of 13 Emergency Fire Suppression Account (EFSA) fires per year with an average cost to the state of \$534,000 per fire. If it is assumed there would be an increase of 3 escaped fires per year, which may be a conservative estimate, this would result in around a \$1.6 million to \$2 million total expenditure increase from the EFSA.

Given the potential for increased fire activity the Forestry Division would also expect to see an increase in overtime costs, in support costs (gas, maintenance, travel, for state owned fire equipment and crews) from the Fire Management Budget of around \$125,000. In addition, it is estimated that around \$200,000 per year would be for contract services (helicopter, air tanker, etc.) from the Fire Management budget. The expenditure increases reflected in this paragraph could be considered an administrative cost. However, for simplicity and to follow consistent practice on legislation of this type, it is included on the fiscal note. This potential impact, along with the unknown fire season, could mean that a future appropriation may be needed to cover the costs of fire suppression.

This estimate also assumes that given the current Wyoming Supreme Court decision, suppression costs for fires on private lands are not recoverable.

The fiscal impact to the judicial system is indeterminable due to an unknown number of cases.

Prepared by: Matthew Sackett, LSO Phone: 777-7881
(Information provided by Bill Crapser, State Lands - Forestry Div, 777-5644;
Kristi Racines, Supreme Court, 777-7502)