

HOUSE BILL NO. HB0297

Fire suppression and restoration funding-2.

Sponsored by: Representative(s) Connolly and Larsen, L and
Senator(s) Crago

A BILL

for

1 AN ACT relating to wildfires; providing appropriations;
2 authorizing grants and expenditures; creating a steering
3 committee; specifying duties of the executive director of
4 the Wyoming wildlife and natural resource trust account
5 board; providing for the transfer of funds; authorizing
6 borrowing; repealing prior borrowing authorization; and
7 providing for effective dates.

8

9 *Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:*

10

11 [WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION, RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION
12 FUNDING]

13

14 **Section 1.**

15

1 (a) There is appropriated from the general fund for
2 the purpose of restoring funds expended by the state of
3 Wyoming to suppress wildfires that occurred in calendar
4 year 2024 the following amounts for the following programs
5 or purposes:

6

7 (i) One million dollars (\$1,000,000.00) for the
8 special contingency division of the office of the governor,
9 unit 0601;

10

11 (ii) One million two hundred sixty-three
12 thousand nine hundred sixty-six dollars (\$1,263,966.00) for
13 the disaster contingency unit within the homeland security
14 division of the office of the governor, unit 1106;

15

16 (iii) Thirty million dollars (\$30,000,000.00) to
17 the emergency fire suppression account within the office of
18 state lands and investments.

19

20 (b) There is appropriated from the general fund up to
21 twenty million dollars (\$20,000,000.00), or as much thereof
22 as is necessary, to be deposited by the state auditor in
23 the legislative stabilization reserve account for repayment

1 of funds borrowed on or before June 30, 2025 from the
2 legislative stabilization reserve account under 2024
3 Wyoming session laws, chapter 118, section 301(b).

4

5 (c) There is appropriated from the general fund the
6 amounts specified in this subsection to the Wyoming
7 wildlife and natural resource trust income account for
8 mitigation and restoration projects needed as a result of
9 the wildfires that occurred within the state of Wyoming in
10 calendar year 2024. Notwithstanding W.S. 9-15-103(b),
11 amounts appropriated in this subsection and subsection (h)
12 of this section shall not be subject to the grant process
13 or other requirements specified in the Wyoming Wildlife and
14 Natural Resource Funding Act. Following review and
15 recommendation by the steering committee created in
16 subsection (d) of this section, the following amounts shall
17 be expended for grants and expenditures approved by the
18 executive director of the Wyoming wildlife and natural
19 resource trust account board:

20

21 (i) One hundred million dollars
22 (\$100,000,000.00) for purposes of restoring grass and
23 vegetation destroyed by wildfires on private and state

1 lands, preventing the establishment of nonnative invasive
2 terrestrial vegetation on private and state lands affected
3 by wildfires, replacing and restoring habitats destroyed by
4 wildfires on private and state lands and restoring lost
5 public infrastructure;

6

7 (ii) Ten million dollars (\$10,000,000.00) for
8 projects to repair or replace watershed habitat and
9 facilities for municipal, community and county water
10 supplies.

11

12 (d) There is created a steering committee to consist
13 of the following members:

14

15 (i) Members of the legislature as follows:

16

17 (A) One (1) member of the Wyoming house of
18 representatives, appointed by the speaker of the house;

19

20 (B) One (1) member of the Wyoming senate,
21 appointed by the president of the senate.

22

1 (ii) The executive director of the Wyoming
2 wildlife and natural resource trust account board, who
3 shall be the chairman of the steering committee;

4

5 (iii) Not to exceed six (6) members appointed by
6 the governor representing or having expertise in, but not
7 limited to, the following:

8

9 (A) The Wyoming office of the governor;

10

11 (B) The Wyoming game and fish department;

12

13 (C) The weed and pest division of the
14 Wyoming department of agriculture;

15

16 (D) The agricultural extension services of
17 the University of Wyoming;

18

19 (E) Wyoming county commissioners;

20

21 (F) The agricultural industry.

22

1 (e) The steering committee created in subsection (d)
2 of this section shall:

3

4 (i) Establish a process to accept and review
5 applications for grants and expenditures from funds
6 appropriated in subsection (c) of this section;

7

8 (ii) Develop grant and expenditure eligibility
9 criteria for receipt of funds appropriated in subsection
10 (c) of this section; and

11

12 (iii) Make recommendations for grants and
13 expenditures from funds appropriated in subsections (c) of
14 this section.

15

16 (f) Any proposed grant or expenditure of funds
17 appropriated in subsection (c) in this section shall be
18 subject to the following requirements:

19

20 (i) The proposed grant or expenditure shall be
21 reviewed by the attorney general, who shall determine
22 whether the grant or expenditure provides a substantial
23 public benefit and constitutes a lawful use of funds; and

1

2 (ii) The executive director of the Wyoming
3 wildlife and natural resource trust account board may
4 impose conditions on his approval of any grant or
5 expenditure, including a requirement for consideration from
6 the recipient or beneficiary thereof.

7

8 (g) There is appropriated twelve thousand five
9 hundred dollars (\$12,500.00) from the general fund to the
10 legislative service office for purposes of providing
11 salary, mileage and per diem to the legislative members of
12 the steering committee appointed under subsection (d) of
13 this section. Payments shall be made in the manner and
14 amount provided by W.S. 28-5-101 for conducting official
15 business of the steering committee.

16

17 (h) From amounts appropriated under subsection (c) of
18 this section, there shall be paid per diem and mileage to
19 the non-legislative members and nonstate employee members
20 of the steering committee appointed under subsection (d) of
21 this section. Payments shall be made in the amount provided
22 for members of the legislature by W.S. 28-5-101 for
23 conducting the official business of the steering committee.

1 The members of the steering committee representing Wyoming
2 state government shall be considered to be acting within
3 the scope of regular employment when conducting the
4 official business of the steering committee and shall
5 receive their regular pay without additional compensation.

6

7 (j) The steering committee shall terminate on
8 December 31, 2026.

9

10 (k) The executive director of the Wyoming wildlife
11 and natural resource trust account board shall, not later
12 than October 1, 2025 and each October 1 thereafter until
13 the funds appropriated in subsection (c) of this section
14 are fully expended, report to the joint agriculture, state
15 and public lands and water resources interim committee and
16 the joint appropriations committee on the expenditure,
17 encumbrances, obligations, recipients, purposes and
18 justifications for all grants and expenditures from funds
19 appropriated in subsection (c) of this section.

20

21 (m) Funds appropriated in this section shall not be
22 transferred or expended for any other purpose.
23 Notwithstanding W.S. 9-2-1008, 9-2-1012(e) and 9-4-207, any

1 unexpended, unobligated funds appropriated in this section
2 shall revert as provided by law on June 30, 2027.

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4 [TRANSFERS - WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION, RESTORATION AND
5 REHABILITATION]

6

7 **Section 2.** The state auditor shall transfer one
8 hundred sixty-two million two hundred seventy-six thousand
9 four hundred sixty-six dollars (\$162,276,466.00) from the
10 legislative stabilization reserve account to the general
11 fund for purposes of this act.

12

13 [BORROWING AUTHORITY - WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION]

14

15 **Section 3.** For the period beginning July 1, 2025 and
16 ending June 30, 2026, the governor is authorized to borrow
17 from the legislative stabilization reserve account up to
18 thirty million dollars (\$30,000,000.00) as necessary to
19 meet funding requirements to fight wildfires in the event
20 the reserves in the office of state lands and investments'
21 forestry division have been exhausted. The governor shall
22 report to the joint appropriations committee, the president
23 of the senate and the speaker of the house of

1 representatives immediately upon exercise of this
2 authority.

3

4

[REPEAL]

5

6 **Section 4.** 2024 Wyoming session laws, chapter 118,
7 section 301(b) is repealed.

8

9

[EFFECTIVE DATES]

10

11 **Section 5.**

12

13 (a) Except as provided in subsection (b) of this
14 section, this act is effective immediately upon completion
15 of all acts necessary for a bill to become law as provided
16 by Article 4, Section 8 of the Wyoming Constitution.

17

18 (b) Sections 3 and 4 of this act are effective July
19 1, 2025.

20

21

(END)