

HOUSE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE REPORT

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Chair of Committee

April 13, 2023  
Date

Committee on Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources.

After consideration on the merits, the Committee recommends the following:

HB23-1273 be amended as follows, and as so amended, be referred to the Committee on Appropriations with favorable recommendation:

1 Amend printed bill, page 2, after line 1 insert:

2           **"SECTION 1. Legislative declaration.** (1) The general  
3 assembly finds and declares that:

4           (a) Home ownership in the United States has long been a  
5 cornerstone of the American dream;

6           (b) Home ownership presents an opportunity to accumulate  
7 wealth, build community, reduce wealth inequality, and improve  
8 generational wealth;

9           (c) Wildfires in Colorado threaten the American dream;

10           (d) Wildfires have become one of the greatest threats to  
11 Coloradans, their homes, and their aspirations to build wealth and  
12 community as evidenced by the ever increasing devastating wildfires in  
13 the state;

14           (e) Over the last ten years, the most destructive wildfires in the  
15 state led to the loss of over 2,544 homes;

16           (f) These wildfires not only destroy homes and communities, but  
17 also contribute negatively to the environment and public health;

18           (g) The toxic chemicals released during wildfires include nitrogen  
19 oxides, sulfur dioxide, volatile organic chemicals, and polycyclic organic  
20 matter. Plastic and treated wood burns also release heavy metals and other  
21 toxic chemicals, such as dioxin.

22           (h) When household waste, like wood and leaves, burn, it  
23 produces smoke-containing vapors and particulate matter, both solid and  
24 liquid droplets suspended in the air;

25           (i) Air pollution from smoke can impact human health. People  
26 exposed to these air pollutants can experience eye and nose irritation,  
27 difficulty breathing, coughing, and headaches. People with heart disease,

1 asthma, emphysema, or other respiratory diseases are especially sensitive  
2 to air pollutants. Other health problems aggravated by wildfires include  
3 lung infections, pneumonia, bronchiolitis, and allergies.

4 (j) Our climate continues to trend towards warmer and drier  
5 temperatures, coupled with the fact that the average homes in Colorado  
6 are decades old, creating optimum conditions for destructive wildfires;

7 (k) While no home is fireproof, a home constructed with  
8 mitigation measures can limit the catastrophic reach of wildfire into our  
9 neighborhoods;

10 (l) Natural hazard mitigation can save four times the amount that  
11 would have been spent on construction costs for rebuilding;

12 (m) Retrofitting a home can range from \$4,000 to \$80,000 and is  
13 far cheaper than rebuilding a home;

14 (n) According to the United Nations, the publicly recognized costs  
15 of wildfires are usually based on direct economic costs to the public  
16 sectors, including fire suppression costs, asset loss, loss of lives, and  
17 insurance costs. However, wildfires also have broad and long-lasting  
18 impacts on the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable  
19 development. Traditionally, such costs have not been factored into the  
20 costs of fires, as they are difficult to assess and quantify. Underestimating  
21 the full costs of wildfires has often led to less political attention and  
22 inadequate budget allocations being devoted to address wildfires.

23 (o) Protecting Colorado homes from wildfires by retrofitting them  
24 with wildfire resilient strategies and technologies will lower the damage  
25 done by destructive wildfires and lessen the cost of these fires on our  
26 economy, environment, and society.

27 (2) Therefore, the general assembly finds and declares that it is  
28 necessary to create a wildfire resilient homes grant program to protect  
29 Coloradans and their homes and surrounding communities from the ever  
30 increasing threats and destruction of wildfires."

31 Renumber succeeding sections accordingly.

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