

From: **CRAIG TEMMER** <catemmer@msn.com>
Date: Sun, Jan 27, 2019 at 8:49 PM
Subject: Re: Testimony for Wildfire Mitigation Bill
To: Aide to Senator Woodward <aide.senate15@gmail.com>

Ms. Munson, Thank you for everything! For Senator Woodward's situational awareness, below the tear line is the email language I forwarded to each senator listed in the email string. Should he wish to talk to me before or after the hearing, I'll make myself available. Vr Craig

Salutation,

I am writing you today regarding Senate Bill 19-037. I'm an Emergency Preparedness/Response and Safety Professional (FEMA Qualified), and a recently retired National Guard Officer on Active Duty. Most importantly, my last assignment prior to my retirement, was at US NORTHERN Command as a Deputy Task Force Commander for the California Wildfires (Summer 2018). In that capacity, I commanded and ensured the seamless integration of Federal Forces that supported Governor Brown's task force on the recent Camp/Mendocino Complex Wildland Forest Fires (California's largest wildfire to date).

Not only do I have a professional interest in the proposed Senate Bill, I also have a very personal reason to support the bill. I reside in Black Forest, north of Colorado Springs, and my family was severely impacted by the June 2013 Black Forest fire. I also own property in two additional locations in communities that have been impacted by wildfires: the Elbert County Fire (March 2018), and the Buffalo Mountain Fire near Silverthorne, Colorado (Summer 2017).

The Black Forest Fire ribbon approached $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from my family's home. When purchased in 2007, I took immediate steps to create a defensible space around the home should a fire impact the property. I'm confident that, had that fire reached my home, minimal damage, if any, would have been incurred. El Paso County has numerous websites showing before and after photos of areas in which mitigation efforts had significant impacts. The photos demonstrate how extremely important mitigation is to communities. Websites with pertinent information: <https://www.bffire.org/community/wildland-mitigation/> and: <https://coloradosun.com/2018/09/24/black-forest-has-rebuilt-after-the-fire-that-gutted-it-but-is-it-at-risk-of-being-destroyed-again/>.

The Elbert County Fire was approximately five miles south of the town of Kiowa, near a forested ridge with 75+ homes. I highlight this fire because Wildland grass fires can be just as impactful to a community as forest fires. The Elbert County Fire is a classic example of defensible space and/or mitigation. The fire consumed five homes and many other structures (barns, etc.). The incident commander created a defensive fire line south of the impacted property line; this decision saved the homes/property on the forested ridge because had the fire made it to the forested ridge, many of the homes in that community would have been lost. I watched this fire via simulcast on the internet with extreme interest and remember many of the lost structures

and homes had tall grasses and noxious weeds adjacent to and butting up against the buildings. This proved to be the main reason the structures were lost--no defensible space or mitigation around the property. Website with pertinent information: <https://denver.cbslocal.com/2018/03/04/brush-fire-burning-near-kiowa/>.

The Buffalo Mountain Fire proved to be a success story in the fighting of the fire and saving over 1400 homes. Due to the forest in that area being hit hard by the beetle kill (2006-2007), my property Home Owners Association started mitigation and defensible space procedures in 2008-2009. At that time, the forest was labeled an extreme fire danger, and the community backed right up to the Wilderness Area (federal land). I'm confident in stating, "Had the fire been near this community of Silverthorne, the mitigation and defensible space created would most likely have saved all of the homes." Website with pertinent information: <https://www.summitdaily.com/news/crime/in-buffalo-mountain-fire-critical-decisions-saved-at-least-two-neighborhoods-from-destruction/>.

I know this bill is designed to provide grants for counties for wildfire mitigation of state, local, and federal lands; I hope my vignettes have proved the importance of mitigation and how grants are the correct vehicle in the state for the "local to state interface," the buffer zone created will save property and lives. The Buffalo Mountain Fire is a success story, all of the personnel within the community and county who planned, developed and implemented mitigation procedures are to be commended. Most importantly, counties will have the authorities to mitigate areas not previously authorized in legislation for crossing local and state boundaries.

One additional consideration for this topic: future legislation concerning the insurance industry and private property mitigation should be discussed. Mitigation saves resources at the local, state and federal level, but if addressed correctly, could save untold resources of the insurance industry and private land owners.

Thank you for allowing me to address these concerns to you and I plan on attending the committee session on 28 January. I welcome any future inquiries pertaining to this topic. My contact information is provided below.

Warmest regards, Craig

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