

HOUSE COMMITTEE OF REFERENCE AMENDMENT

Committee on Agriculture, Water & Natural Resources.

HB23-1273 be amended as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

1 (n) According to the United Nations, the publicly recognized costs
2 of wildfires are usually based on direct economic costs to the public
3 sectors, including fire suppression costs, asset loss, loss of lives, and
4 insurance costs. However, wildfires also have broad and long-lasting
5 impacts on the economic, social, and environmental aspects of sustainable
6 development. Traditionally, such costs have not been factored into the
7 costs of fires, as they are difficult to assess and quantify. Underestimating
8 the full costs of wildfires has often led to less political attention and
9 inadequate budget allocations being devoted to address wildfires.

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

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

18 Renumber succeeding sections accordingly.

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