

House Engrossed

FEMA; wildfires; flooding; cost threshold

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Fifty-fifth Legislature
Second Regular Session
2022

HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 2006

A CONCURRENT MEMORIAL

URGING THE ADMINISTRATOR OF THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY TO INCLUDE FLOODING COSTS RESULTING FROM WILDFIRES IN CALCULATING THE CUMULATIVE FIRE COST THRESHOLD.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 To the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency:

2 Your memorialist respectfully represents:

3 Whereas, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is an agency
4 of the United States Department of Homeland Security whose primary purpose
5 is to coordinate the response to disasters that occur in the United States
6 and that overwhelm the resources of local and state authorities; and

7 Whereas, the United States President can declare a major disaster
8 for any fire or flood, regardless of the cause, that has caused damage of
9 such severity that it is beyond the combined capabilities of state and
10 local governments to respond; and

11 Whereas, the Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) Program is a
12 disaster assistance grant program within FEMA that is available to states,
13 territories and local and tribal governments for the mitigation,
14 management and control of fires burning on publicly or privately owned
15 forests or grasslands that are of such severity as to constitute a major
16 disaster. Under this program, the state submits a request for assistance
17 to the FEMA Regional Director, who reviews the request based on threat to
18 lives and property, availability of state and local firefighting
19 resources, high fire danger conditions and the potential for major
20 economic impact. This review process is completed and a FEMA decision is
21 rendered within a matter of hours; and

22 Whereas, under the FMAG Program, FEMA provides assistance in the
23 form of grants for equipment, supplies and personnel costs; and

24 Whereas, large-scale wildfires dramatically alter the terrain and
25 ground conditions of affected lands, creating conditions ripe for flash
26 flooding and mudflow. The results of flooding can be devastating, even
27 for areas that are not traditionally flood-prone, and the flood risk
28 remains significantly higher in these areas until vegetation is restored,
29 typically up to five years after a wildfire; and

30 Whereas, to be eligible for federal disaster relief funds, a state
31 must demonstrate that it has met the cumulative fire cost threshold.
32 Assistance under FMAG is provided only for the declared fire responsible
33 for meeting or exceeding the cumulative fire cost threshold and any future
34 declared fires for that calendar year. Any resultant flooding from the
35 fire does not apply to the cumulative fire cost threshold and is not
36 eligible for assistance under the FMAG program; and

37 Whereas, this failure to include the costs of flooding that directly
38 results from wildfires in the cumulative fire cost threshold leaves many
39 rural communities at a disadvantage since the costs from the fire combined
40 with the costs from related flooding often do not cumulatively meet the
41 required threshold for federal aid.

1 Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of
2 Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

3 1. That the Federal Emergency Management Agency amend its current
4 system of calculating the cumulative fire cost threshold from wildfires to
5 include the costs resulting from and directly related to flooding.

6 2. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit
7 copies of this Memorial to the Administrator of the Federal Emergency
8 Management Agency.