

A resolution expressing concern about growing damage from wildfires and encouraging increased support for coordinated community risk reduction, research, and suppression efforts, including adequate equipment as well as personnel resources

Offered by:

National Fire Protection Association
International Association of Fire Chiefs
International Code Council
International Association of Wildland Fire
National Association of State Fire Marshals

Whereas by every measure wildland fires are causing more widespread destruction than ever;

Whereas, in 2017, a total of 12,306 structures were destroyed by wildfires, including more than 8,000 homes and more than 200 commercial buildings;

Whereas the National Interagency Fire Center reports that there were 71,499 wildfires in 2017 including fires in Puerto Rico and all 50 states except for Hawaii;

Whereas just one 2018 wildfire, the Butte County Camp Fire in Northern California, killed at least 86 people, destroyed more than 19,000 structures, burned an estimated 240 square miles, caused losses near \$13 billion, and required more than 1,000 first responders;

Whereas too few communities participate in risk reduction programs;

Whereas community risk reduction is too often a strategy adopted after an incident not before;

Whereas there are substantive measures governments, building owners, developers, tenants, and others can take proactively to reduce the impacts of wildfire;

Whereas too few communities implement and enforce the most current consensus-based codes and standards;

Whereas land use decisions are sometimes more sensitive to the risks of flooding than of wildfires;

Whereas citizens need to understand the importance of following commands from first responders, including directions for evacuation;

Whereas documented changes in weather and climate exacerbate the seriousness of wildfires;

Whereas more research is needed to understand wildfires and how to both fight and prevent them;

Whereas just one 2013 wildfire, the Yarnell Hill Fire, burned 8,400 acres and killed 19 firefighters;

Whereas the National Fallen Firefighters Foundation has adapted its 16 life safety initiatives to reduce

the number of wildland firefighters killed in the line of duty;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Congressional Fire Services Institute supports federal legislation, funding and policies that:

1. Build public awareness of the steps that the public and government should take to minimize risks in vulnerable communities;
2. Promote the use and enforcement of the most current consensus-based codes and standards;
3. Encourage consideration of fire risks of new development in wildland-urban interfaces;
4. Support the personnel, infrastructure, and equipment needed for robust suppression efforts;
5. Promote community risk reduction and target those areas most vulnerable to wildfire;
6. Encourage research to identify best practices on preventing and fighting wildfires;
7. Support efforts to reduce wildland firefighter injuries, illnesses, and fatalities.

Unanimously Approved on April 26, 2019.