



## Gov. Hickenlooper announces wildfire insurance and forest health task force, wildland fire advisory committee

**DENVER — Wednesday, Jan. 30, 2013** — Gov. John Hickenlooper signed two Executive Orders today that will reduce the risk of loss in wildland-urban interface, increase customer knowledge of insurance options and protect forest health. A third Executive Order signed today by the governor lifts the existing gubernatorial suspension of prescribed fires for only slash pile burn operations.

“More than 25 percent of Colorado’s population lives in the wildland-urban interface,” Hickenlooper said. “These new Executive Orders, along with a proposed fuels reduction grant program, detail actions that can help reduce the loss from wildland fires and increase protection for communities, first responders and property investments.”

Executive Order B 2013-002 creates the Task Force on Wildfire Insurance and Forest Health to examine how to best protect property and people within and adjacent to the wildland-urban interface and Colorado’s landscape, which is critical to the state’s economic health.

The task force will review issues regarding insurance coverage at the 2012 fires including replacement costs for destroyed homes, relocation assistance, accounting for lost personal property and the timing of insurance benefits. It will explore how to provide better understanding of insurance coverage for policyholders. Also, it will explore insurance policies that promote forest health, reduce wildland fire threats and help incentivize wise planning and stewardship and reduce loss of life and property.

Executive Order B 2013-001 creates the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Advisory Committee. The Committee will advise the Director of the Division of Fire Prevention and Control on all matters pertaining to wildfire preparedness, response, suppression, coordination, or management and prescribed fire.

Last March, Hickenlooper suspended the use of prescribed and controlled burning by state agencies or on state lands until protocols and procedures were reviewed and revised as necessary. Executive Order D 2013-002 amends that suspension to allow for slash pile burning under controlled conditions and new guidelines.

These new guidelines go above and beyond the recommended best practices for slash pile burning to ensure all such burns are conducted in a safe and effective manner.

“Although weather conditions across Colorado have changed over the recent months, for those Colorado residents living in the wildland-urban interface, there is still concern of disastrous wildfire,” the Executive Order says. “Pile burning operations in this area will reduce the risk of devastating wildfires, by reducing the hazardous accumulation of slash resulting from fuels treatment activities. These fuel treatment activities not only reduce wildfire potential, but work to increase the health of forests, by thinning forest strands and eliminating weak and diseased trees. Weaker trees that remain in the forest are prone to insect attacks and disease.”

These Executive Orders come at the same time the governor is requesting \$10.3 million for the Department of Natural Resources in an amended budget request. The funding is for a grant program that would match local dollars for improving forest health and wildfire prevention in wildland-urban interface areas.

The full texts of the three Executive Orders are linked below.

The members of the task forces and advisory committee named in the Executive Orders:

**Task Force on Wildfire Insurance and Forest Health Members:**

- Barbara Kelley – Chair, Executive Director, Department of Regulatory Agencies
- Jim Reisberg, Commissioner, Colorado Division of Insurance
- Paul Cooke, Division of Fire Prevention and Control
- Kevin Klein, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management
- Lisa Dale, Department of Natural Resources
- Katherine Schaubert, Colorado State Forest Service
- Cheri Ford, U.S. Forest Service
- Robert Ferm, American Insurance Association
- Kelly Campbell, Property Casualty Insurers Association of America
- Carol Ekarius, Coalition for the Upper South Platte
- Meghan Storie, Colorado Municipal League
- Jenifer Waller, Colorado Bankers Association
- Bruce Bowler, Colorado Mortgage Lenders Association
- Amie Mayhew, Colorado Home Builders Association
- Doug Monger, Colorado Counties Inc.
- Doug Kemper, Colorado Water Congress
- Dick Parachini, Water Quality, Department of Public Health and Environment
- Mike Silverstein, Air Quality, Department of Public Health and Environment

**Wildland Fire and Prescribed Fire Matters Advisory Committee:**


- Dan Gibbs, Colorado Counties Inc.
- Bret Waters, Colorado Municipal League
- Maj. Gen. Michael Edwards, Adjutant General, Colorado National Guard
- James Fischer, Colorado Prescribed Fire Council
- Bruce Dikken, Colorado Professional Firefighters Association
- Jerrod Vanlandingham, Colorado State Fire Chiefs Association
- John Decker, Colorado State Firefighters Association
- Joseph Duda, Acting State Forester, Colorado State Forest Service
- Joe Pelle, County Sheriffs of Colorado
- Dave Hard, Director, Office of Emergency Management
- Dave Parmley, Emergency Fire Fund Committee
- Mike Babler, Nonprofit Conservation Community
- Carole Walker, Property and Casualty Insurers
- Ken Kerr, Colorado Fire Management Officer, Bureau of Land Management
- Willie Thompson, Acting Fire Director, U.S. Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Region
- Dave Nuss, National Fire Protection Association
- Bob Struble, Colorado Emergency Managers Association

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