

SENATE RESOLUTION No. 1779

A RESOLUTION recognizing the members of the Kansas Forest Service's Fire Management Program for the incredible steps they take to ensure that Kansas is adequately prepared to combat wildfires and protect its citizens.

WHEREAS, The Kansas Forest Service's Fire Management Program is a department within the College of Agriculture at Kansas State University; and

WHEREAS, The program employs six full-time staff, including: A fire management program coordinator; a training specialist; a protection specialist; an excess property manager; and two mechanics; and

WHEREAS, About 85% of firefighters in Kansas are volunteers from every profession, from church pastor to farmer to teacher, and every occupation in between; and

WHEREAS, The Kansas Forest Service hires about 30 temporary employees each spring who remain in their regular jobs until they are called upon to participate in federal incidents. The employment of these individuals puts a complex and costly burden on the Kansas Forest Service's fire staff, accountant and human resource specialist to ensure they are equipped with the gear, training and transportation necessary to get them from their homes in Kansas to incidents elsewhere in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The Kansas Forest Service bears that burden because it is part of an interchange between state and federal firefighters that can benefit Kansas during times of need; and

WHEREAS, Last spring during the Starbuck and Highland fires, federal resources were brought to Kansas to help. The assistance included 25 fire engines, five water tenders and four supervisory personnel to the Starbuck fire, and part of a federally qualified incident management team, whose expertise is wildland fire, to the Highland fire. Those resources could only be brought to Kansas because of the relationship the Kansas Forest Service has with the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior; and

WHEREAS, Another tool the Kansas Forest Service uses to add to their capacity to suppress and control wildland fire is the Great Plains Interagency Fire Compact, an agreement that gives them the capability to bring in resources on very short notice from other states without going through the federal emergency management system, when time is of the utmost importance; and

WHEREAS, The Fire Management Program provides wildland fire training to Kansas fire departments, prescribed burn training to landowners, and defensible space training to homeowners; and

WHEREAS, The program administers the Volunteer Fire Assistance Grant, which provides additional financial assistance to fire departments throughout Kansas; and

WHEREAS, Fire specialists are deployed to out-of-state incidents to fill roles in logistical and operational sections, and also as division supervisors, task force leaders and incident commanders; and

WHEREAS, During recent wildland fires in Kansas, the program filled roles in the State Emergency Center, where they assisted the Division of Emergency Management with tracking and moving resources, gathering information about current fires and filling resource requests in the individual incidents; and

WHEREAS, Over the past three years, Kansas firefighters have fought fires that have burned over 1 million acres across the state, including the Anderson Creek and Starbuck fires, two of the largest wildfires in state history; and

WHEREAS, Most of the funding for this program is provided by grants from the United States Forest Service: Now, therefore,

*Be it resolved by the Senate of the State of Kansas:* That we recognize the members of the Kansas Forest Service's Fire Management Program for the incredible steps they take to ensure that Kansas is adequately prepared to combat wildfires and protect its citizens; and

*Be it further resolved:* That the Secretary of the Senate shall send five enrolled copies of this resolution to Senator McGinn.

Senate Resolution No. 1779 was sponsored by Senator Carolyn McGinn.

I hereby certify that the above RESOLUTION originated in the SENATE, and was adopted by that body

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*President of the Senate.*

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*Secretary of the Senate.*