

Proposal: Statewide Wildland Suppression and Mitigation Fund for Nevada

Purpose:

To establish a dedicated funding source to reduce wildland fire and all hazard risks, support mitigation activities, and enhance disaster preparedness for communities at risk of wildland fire and other natural disasters across Nevada.

Background:

Nevada faces increasing risks of wildfires and other natural disasters, driven by factors such as climate change, increased development in Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) zones, and the accumulation of hazardous fuels. Current resources are often insufficient to address these challenges effectively.

This proposal aims to create a sustainable and equitable funding mechanism to support suppression, mitigation, and disaster resilience efforts statewide, ensuring Nevada's communities and ecosystems are better prepared and protected.

Proposed Funding Model:

To generate the necessary funds, the following monthly contributions will be applied:

1. **Residential Units:**
 - Per month for each residential unit statewide.
 2. **Businesses:**
 - Per month for Small Business.
 - Per month for Large Businesses
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Funding Option A.

1. **Residential Units:**
 - **Contribution:** \$0.50 per residential unit per month.
 - **Units:** Approx. 1,348,211 residential units statewide.
 - **Monthly Revenue:**
\$674,105.50
 - **Annual Revenue:**
\$8,089,266
2. **Businesses:**
 - **Small Businesses (Fewer than 50 employees):**
 - **Contribution:** \$5 per month.
 - **Estimation:** 300,000 small businesses.
 - **Monthly Revenue:**
\$1,500,000

- **Annual Revenue:**
\$18,000,00
- **Large Businesses (50 or more employees):**
 - **Contribution:** \$10 per month.
 - **Estimation:** 13,257 large businesses.
 - **Monthly Revenue:**
\$132,570
 - **Annual Revenue:**
\$1,590,840

Total Estimated Annual Revenue

- **Residential Units:** \$8,089,266
- **Small Businesses:** \$18,000,000
- **Large Businesses:** \$1,590,840

Combined Total: \$8,089,266 + \$18,000,000 + \$1,590,840 = \$27,680,106

Funding Option B.

1. **Residential Units:**
 - **Contribution:** \$1 per residential unit per month.
 - **Units:** Approx. 1,348,211 residential units statewide.
 - **Monthly Revenue:**
\$1,348,211
 - Annual Revenue:**
\$16,178,532
2. **Businesses:**
 - **Small Businesses (Fewer than 50 employees):**
 - **Contribution:** \$5 per month.
 - **Estimation:** 300,000 small businesses.
 - **Monthly Revenue:**
\$1,500,000
 - **Annual Revenue:**
\$18,000,000
 - **Large Businesses (50 or more employees):**
 - **Contribution:** \$10 per month.
 - **Estimation:** 13,257 large businesses.
 - **Monthly Revenue:**
\$132,570
 - **Annual Revenue:**
\$1,590,840

Total Estimated Annual Revenue

- **Residential Units:** \$16,178,532
- **Small Businesses:** \$18,000,000
- **Large Businesses:** \$1,590,840

Combined Total: $\$16,178,532 + \$18,000,000 + \$1,590,840 = \underline{\underline{\$35,769,372}}$

Funding Fee Option C

1. **Residential approximately 1,348,211 housing units.**
 - Assuming each unit contributes \$1 per month:
 - $1,348,211 \text{ units} \times \$1/\text{unit/month} = \$1,348,211 \text{ per month}$
 - Annually: $\$1,348,211 \times 12 \text{ months} = \$16,178,532$
 - Cost Per Household \$1 per month = \$12 per year
2. **Businesses:** Nevada has approximately 313,257 small businesses, accounting for 99.2% of all businesses in the state.

- **Businesses with fewer than 50 employees:**

Assuming the majority of small businesses fall into this category, estimate around 300,000 businesses.

$300,000 \text{ businesses} \times \$10/\text{business/month} = \$3,000,000 \text{ per month}$

Annually: $\$3,000,000 \times 12 \text{ months} = \$36,000,000$

\$10 Per month = \$120 per year

- **Businesses with 50 or more employees:**

Assuming the remaining businesses fall into this category, estimate around 13,257 businesses. $13,257 \text{ businesses} \times \$20/\text{business/month} = \$265,140 \text{ per month}$

Annually: $\$265,140 \times 12 \text{ months} = \$3,181,680$

\$20 per month = \$240 per year

Total Estimated Annual Revenue: Residential: \$16,178,532

Businesses: $\$36,000,000 + \$3,181,680 = \$39,181,680$ **Combined Total:** $\$16,178,532 + \$39,181,680 = \underline{\underline{\$55,360,212}}$

This estimation suggests that the proposed fund could generate approximately \$55 million annually to support wildland fire suppression and mitigation efforts across Nevada.

Fund Management and Allocation

The **Nevada Wildland Suppression and Mitigation Fund** will be managed by a dedicated **Nevada Wildland Suppression and Mitigation Fund Board**, composed of representatives from key organizations and stakeholders, ensuring transparency and equity in fund distribution. The board's primary goal is to allocate resources effectively to enhance wildland fire suppression, mitigation, and all-hazard preparedness across the state.

Fund Allocation Structure

1. Nevada Division of Forestry (NDF):

- **Allocation: 50% of funds**, up to **\$30 million annually**.
- **Purpose:** Focused on statewide suppression, preparedness, and response efforts, including hazardous fuels reduction, fire crew training, and wildfire response equipment upgrades.
- **Excess Funds (Above \$30 million):** After the \$30 million threshold is reached, any additional funds will be reallocated to the other designated categories.

2. Nevada Emergency Management:

- **Allocation: 20% of funds**, up to **\$30 million annually**.
- **Purpose:** Enhancing state disaster preparedness and response capabilities for all hazards, including evacuation planning, infrastructure protection, and disaster recovery programs.
- **Excess Funds (Above \$30 million):** Funds exceeding \$30 million will be redistributed to other eligible organizations and initiatives.

3. Local Government Officials:

- **Allocation: 20% of funds**, based on a **wildland fire and all-hazard risk assessment** conducted by the State of Nevada.
- **Purpose:** Direct support for local governments to mitigate community-specific risks, including defensible space projects, public awareness campaigns, and local fire department enhancements.
- **Criteria for Allocation:** Risk assessments will guide funding prioritization, ensuring high-risk areas receive appropriate resources.

4. Grants to Other Organizations:

- **Allocation: 10% of funds** will be reserved for grants.
- **Purpose:** Support for organizations engaged in:
 - Wildland fire mitigation and preparedness.
 - Disaster response and recovery initiatives.
 - Community education and risk reduction programs.
- **Grant Process:** A competitive application process will determine grant recipients, prioritizing impactful and innovative projects.

Governance and Oversight

The fund board will:

- Establish clear guidelines and criteria for fund allocation.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of funded programs.
- Publish annual reports detailing fund usage, accomplishments, and remaining balances.

Projected Impact

This structured allocation model ensures that resources are distributed equitably and strategically, addressing Nevada's most pressing needs in wildfire suppression, mitigation, and disaster resilience. By balancing statewide initiatives with localized support and innovative grant opportunities, the fund will maximize its impact on protecting communities and ecosystems.

Eligible and Ineligible Projects for the Nevada Wildland Suppression and Mitigation Fund

Eligible Projects:

The following projects align with the fund's goals of reducing wildfire risks, enhancing preparedness, and improving community resilience:

1. Hazardous Fuels Reduction:

- Thinning vegetation and tree removal to reduce wildfire intensity.
- Mowing and controlled burns to manage excessive fuel loads.
- Mechanical and hand treatments on public and private lands.
- Removal and disposal of invasive species contributing to wildfire risk.

2. Community Protection:

- Creation and maintenance of defensible space around homes and critical infrastructure.
- Home hardening programs, including fire-resistant roofs, windows, and siding.
- Financial assistance for low-income homeowners to implement wildfire mitigation measures.

3. Suppression Resources:

- Purchasing and upgrading firefighting equipment and vehicles.
- Training programs for fire crews, including wildland firefighting and advanced suppression techniques.
- Support for mutual aid agreements and partnerships among fire departments.

4. Prevention and Education:

- Development and dissemination of public awareness campaigns on fire safety and disaster preparedness.
- Implementation of school programs to teach fire science, wildfire prevention, and evacuation planning.
- Workshops and training for community members on creating defensible spaces and emergency preparedness.

5. Disaster Mitigation:

- Planning, development, and improvement of evacuation routes.
- Infrastructure resilience projects, such as upgrading power grids and water supply systems to withstand disasters.
- Establishing secondary access points for at-risk communities to improve emergency response.

Ineligible Projects:

The following projects do not align with the fund's objectives and will not be eligible for funding:

1. Non-Mitigative Landscaping Projects:

- General landscaping projects not tied to wildfire risk reduction.
- Beautification efforts unrelated to defensible space creation.

2. Routine Maintenance:

- Routine upkeep of properties or infrastructure (e.g., lawn care or street cleaning).
- Maintenance projects unrelated to wildfire prevention or hazard mitigation.

3. Non-Essential Infrastructure:

- Construction or upgrades of infrastructure not directly tied to disaster resilience or mitigation.
- Non-essential development projects, such as parks or recreational facilities without wildfire mitigation components.

4. Private Ventures:

- Projects benefiting private businesses or individuals that do not align with community-wide mitigation goals.
- Activities that only serve commercial interests without broader community impact.

5. Non-Wildfire-Specific Activities:

- Projects targeting hazards unrelated to wildfires or disasters (e.g., pest control or general environmental projects).
- Research or studies not directly tied to actionable mitigation strategies.

6. Projects Without Community Involvement or Impact:

- Initiatives without measurable benefits for the broader community or those failing to engage community members.
- Projects that duplicate existing efforts without offering additional benefits.

Benefits of the Fund:

- **Improved Safety:** Protect lives, properties, and critical infrastructure.
- **Reduced Costs:** Lower suppression expenses by mitigating fire risks in advance.
- **Community Resilience:** Empower communities to take proactive measures.
- **Environmental Protection:** Safeguard Nevada's natural resources and biodiversity.

Implementation Plan:

1. **Legislation:** Secure approval from the Nevada State Legislature for the funding model.
2. **Infrastructure:** Develop a streamlined system for collecting and managing contributions.
3. **Partnerships:** Collaborate with local governments, businesses, and community organizations.
4. **Transparency:** Ensure regular reporting on fund usage and project outcomes.

Projected Impact:

With consistent funding, Nevada can reduce the frequency and severity of wildfires and improve the resilience of at-risk communities. This proactive approach will save lives, reduce economic losses, and create a safer environment for all residents.

Conclusion:

This Statewide Wildland Suppression and Mitigation Fund represents a critical investment in Nevada's safety and sustainability. By sharing the responsibility through equitable monthly contributions, all stakeholders can contribute to a safer and more resilient future for our state.