

1 TO THE HONORABLE SENATE:

2 The Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs to which  
3 was referred House Bill No. 935 entitled “An act relating to emergency  
4 management” respectfully reports that it has considered the same and  
5 recommends that the Senate propose to the House that the bill be amended by  
6 adding a new section to be Sec. 11a to read as follows:

7 Sec. 11a. INCREASING WILDLAND FIRE RESPONSE CAPACITY

8 TASK FORCE; REPORT

9 (a) Creation. There is created the Increasing Wildland Fire Response  
10 Capacity Report to examine and report on increasing Vermont’s capacity for  
11 wildland fire response.

12 (b) Membership. The following individuals and entities shall be invited by  
13 Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation to join the Task Force:

14 (1) the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation;

15 (2) Vermont Emergency Management;

16 (3) the Department of Public Safety, Division of Fire Safety;

17 (4) the Green Mountain National Forest;

18 (5) the Vermont League of Cities and Towns; and

19 (6) not more than two municipal fire chiefs.

20 (c) Powers and duties. The Task Force shall examine how to best increase  
21 Vermont’s capacity for wildland fire response, including:

1           (1) examining available information on wildland fire incidence and  
2           existing response capacity, and making recommendations regarding staffing,  
3           funding, equipment, supplies, and infrastructure, including vehicles, necessary  
4           to increase wildland fire response capacity; and

5           (2) identifying any potential policy or statutory changes needed to  
6           improve wildland fire response capacity; clarify statewide roles and  
7           responsibilities among State, municipal, and federal entities; and recommend  
8           any coordination and communication improvements.

9           (d) Assistance. The Task Force shall have the administrative, technical,  
10           and legal assistance of Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation.

11           (e) Report. On or before November 15, 2027, the Task Force shall submit  
12           a written report to House Committees on Agriculture, Food Resiliency, and  
13           Forestry and on Government Operations and Military Affairs and to the Senate  
14           Committees on Natural Resources and Energy and on Government Operations  
15           with its findings and any recommendations for legislative action.

16           (f) Meetings.

17           (1) The Commissioner of the Department of Forests, Parks and  
18           Recreation, or designee, shall call the first meeting of the Task Force.

19           (2) The Commissioner of the Department of Forests, Parks and  
20           Recreation, or designee, shall be the chair of the Task Force.

1           (3) A majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum.

2           (4) The Task Force shall cease to exist on November 16, 2027.

3           (g) Compensation and reimbursement. Members of the Task Force shall be  
4           entitled to per diem compensation and reimbursement of expenses as permitted  
5           under 32 V.S.A. § 1010 for not more than three meetings. These payments  
6           shall be made from monies appropriated to the Department of Forests, Parks  
7           and Recreation.

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11           (Committee vote: \_\_\_\_\_)

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Senator \_\_\_\_\_

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FOR THE COMMITTEE