



S. 975 – A bill granting the consent and approval of Congress to an interstate forest fire protection compact

Floor Situation

S. 975 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Senator John Thune (R-SD) on March 23, 2007. The bill passed the Senate by unanimous consent on July 13, 2007.

S. 975 is scheduled to be considered on the floor on July 30, 2007.

Summary

S. 975 grants the consent and approval of Congress to the interstate forest fire protection compact for the Great Plains region. In order for states to officially work together under such an agreement, Congressional approval is required.

The purpose of this compact is to promote effective prevention and control of forest fires in the Great Plains region of the United States by the maintenance of adequate forest fire fighting services by the member states, and by providing for reciprocal aid in fighting forest fires among the compacting states of the region, including South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, Colorado, and any adjoining state of a current member state.

This compact is operative immediately as to those states ratifying it if any two or more of the member states have ratified it. In each state, the state forester or officer holding the equivalent position who is responsible for forest fire control may act as compact administrator for that state and may consult with like officials of the other member states and may implement cooperation between the states in forest fire prevention and control. The compact administrators of the member states may organize to coordinate the services of the member states and provide administrative integration in carrying out the purposes of this compact. Each member state may formulate and put in effect a forest fire plan for that state.

Background

In South Dakota in 2006, there were more than 2,000 wildland fires that caused damage to more than 230,000 acres of land.

This legislation would bring together the states of South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, and Colorado to join forces in fighting forest fires. This would create an interstate pact in which states could count on the help of other states when conditions reach crisis level. This type of pact is particularly important when considering the severe drought conditions that this region has been dealing with over the last six years.

Cost

The Congressional Budget Office has not scored this legislation.

Staff Contact

For questions or further information contact Chris Vieson at (202) 226-2302.