

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA  
ONE HUNDRED THIRD LEGISLATURE  
FIRST SESSION  
**LEGISLATIVE BILL 634**

Final Reading

Introduced by Davis, 43; Brasch, 16; Carlson, 38; Christensen, 44;  
Hansen, 42; Larson, 40; Mello, 5; Schilz, 47; Wallman,  
30; Dubas, 34.

Read first time January 23, 2013

Committee: Natural Resources

A BILL

- 1 FOR AN ACT relating to wildfires; to adopt the Wildfire Control Act
- 2 of 2013; and to declare an emergency.
- 3 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1           Section 1. Sections 1 to 4 of this act shall be known and  
2 may be cited as the Wildfire Control Act of 2013.

3           Sec. 2. The Legislature finds that the State of  
4 Nebraska's forests, pasture lands, and rangelands have been destroyed  
5 by catastrophic wildfires, primarily due to higher temperatures,  
6 intense and prolonged drought, increased forest fuel-loads, and the  
7 extensive spread of Eastern Red Cedar trees into forests, pasture  
8 lands, and rangelands. Because of these conditions, wildfires occur  
9 more frequently, spread and grow very rapidly upon ignition, and  
10 consume large tracts of productive land. These severe, fast-moving  
11 wildfires put the lives of citizens, emergency responders, and  
12 visitors at great risk, are difficult to control, quickly overwhelm  
13 local suppression capacity, and cost enormous amounts of money to  
14 suppress and control.

15           Sec. 3. (1) Pursuant to the Wildfire Control Act of 2013,  
16 the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency shall contract for all costs  
17 to place one single-engine air tanker in Nebraska for use in fighting  
18 wildfires.

19           (2) It is the intent of the Legislature that the Nebraska  
20 Emergency Management Agency deploy the single-engine air tanker  
21 quickly and without delay so as to prevent the rapid spread of  
22 wildfires upon ignition.

23           (3) The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency shall  
24 prepare a report on or before December 1 of each year describing (a)  
25 the date and time each request to deploy a single-engine air tanker

1 is made to the agency, (b) the date and time a single-engine air  
2 tanker was deployed in response to a request for such a tanker, (c)  
3 an explanation of the reason for any delay of more than one hour from  
4 the time of a request for deployment of a single-engine air tanker  
5 and the time of the actual deployment of such a tanker, and (d) an  
6 explanation of the reason for the denial of a request to deploy a  
7 single-engine air tanker. The report shall be submitted  
8 electronically to the Governor and to the Clerk of the Legislature.

9           Sec. 4. Pursuant to the Wildfire Control Act of 2013, the  
10 Nebraska Forest Service shall (1) administer programs to thin forests  
11 to reduce forest fuel-loads in order to substantially reduce wildfire  
12 risk, intensity, and rate of spread and develop markets for woody  
13 biomass generated from forest thinnings, (2) provide expanded  
14 training programs for volunteer firefighters, private landowners, and  
15 communities in Nebraska in fire suppression tactics of wildfires in  
16 order to increase suppression effectiveness and safety, (3) expand  
17 the federal excess property programs sponsored by the United States  
18 Department of Agriculture and the United States Department of Defense  
19 and managed by the Nebraska Forest Service in Nebraska, (4) oversee  
20 the rehabilitation of forest lands that have been destroyed by  
21 wildfires, (5) manage single-engine air tanker bases and operations  
22 in Nebraska, and (6) contract to construct at least two single-engine  
23 air tanker bases and develop one or more mobile single-engine air  
24 tanker bases in Nebraska.

25           Sec. 5. Since an emergency exists, this act takes effect

1 when passed and approved according to law.