

# Summary of work on HJ62 (wildfire prevention, resilience)

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL  
MARCH 16, 2026

## WHAT IS HJ62?

House Joint Resolution 62 ([Study of wildfire prevention, resilience](#)) asks the [Environmental Quality Council](#) to examine:

- the scope of wildfire impacts on communities
- the role of wildfire-focused land use planning in supporting effective wildfire response
- the current legal and policy framework regarding wildfire resilience in Montana
- solution that can alleviate risk in Montana

## WHAT'S IN THE EQC WORK PLAN FOR HJ62?

- Review relevant laws, policies, and legal decisions
- Panel discussion with firefighters, planners, builders, homeowners
- Summarize related information from other states
- Deliverables: Brief report, legislation

## WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

On Oct. 22, DNRC staff introduced the topic, discussing the department's [Wildfire Risk Assessment tool](#) and its [2020 Montana Wildfire Risk Assessment report](#). On Jan. 14, the council hosted a panel discussion on wildfire impacts and costs for communities. See p. 2 for panel findings, recommendations

## WHAT'S ON THE MARCH AGENDA?

Council members asked for a broader discussion of wildfires and property insurance rates and policies. The council will host a 5-person panel discussion of industry, consumer, and regulatory experts.

## WHAT COMES NEXT?

The council and work plan will direct the next step of the HJ62 study. The council may propose recommendations or legislation. The council meets next on May 12-13.

**HJ62 PANEL\* FINDINGS (FROM JAN. 14)**

**Escalating costs and risks.** Wildfire risks in Montana have doubled since 2000. Fire insurance is the fastest-growing insurance expense. Nine communities face an “urban conflagration risk” comparable to fires in Paradise, Calif., and Maui.

**Property vulnerability.** Traditional fire suppression and fuels reduction efforts are not enough to protect structures. Hardening structures is not expensive and will lower the costs of insurance and destructive fires.

**PANEL RECOMMENDATIONS (FROM JAN. 14)**

1. Prioritize state funding of wildfire-resistant retrofits.
2. Adopt wildland urban interface (WUI) building codes at a local level, as authorized.
3. Model state wildfire risk planning on the Montana Floodplains Program (DNRC)

\*panelists were Ryan Maye Handy, wildfire and land use planning specialist (Headwaters Economics); Chief Brad White, Grand Co. Fire District (Colo.)