



City of Tacoma

City Council Action Memorandum

**TO:** Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager  
**FROM:** Tory Green, Fire Chief *Te*  
Gil Barthe, Assistant Chief, Operations  
**COPY:** City Council and City Clerk  
**SUBJECT:** Resolution – Interlocal Agreement with Washington State Department of Natural Resources for personnel and other resources for wildfire or emergency response  
**DATE:** March 4, 2024

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### **SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:**

A resolution authorizing the execution of an interlocal agreement with Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to allow the Tacoma Fire Department to provide personnel or other resources for wildfire or other emergency response and to establish DNR's payment and reimbursement responsibilities.

The limited purpose of this interlocal agreement is for the Tacoma Fire Department to provide employees, referred to as single resources, equipment, material and/or services for wildfire or other emergency response and to establish DNR's payment and reimbursement responsibilities to Tacoma Fire Department for providing such single resources, equipment material and/or services. Dispatches under this agreement are limited to the State of Washington, unless the single resource is rostered on a Pacific Northwest Incident Management Team (IMT) type 1, 2 or 3.

Agreement will also provide:

- Ability for TFD firefighters to receive and maintain red card status to National Wildfire Coordination Group (NWCG) standards.
- Provide arena for TFD personnel to take NWCG classes and gain documented wildfire & all-hazard experience to progress towards advanced qualifications in Operations, Planning, Logistics, Finance, Public Information, and Safety.
- Maintain qualifications for personnel to be able to teach at DNR academies and other local courses.
- Provide crossover qualifications and experience for All-Hazard incident management.
- Personnel meeting these standards would become wildfire/all-hazard deployment eligible within the State of Washington for wildfire mobilization and nationwide for Incident Management Team (IMT) needs.
- No set minimum requirements by DNR for number of participating personnel or number of days required to deploy.
- DNR Training Officer will maintain all training and experience records for personnel listed under the agreement.
- Agreement provides for backpay to cover planned shifts and payment for hours worked by mobilized firefighters on overtime days.

### **BACKGROUND:**

**This Department's Recommendation is Based On:** With the hotter, drier and longer summers, the City has been experiencing a growing number of brush and wildland urban interface (WUI) fires. These fires often include heavy fuel loads, rugged terrain, limited or absent water supply systems, and diminished access for Type 1 engines (standard TFD fire engine). These target hazard WUI areas are capable of fire behavior that can impact civilian and firefighter life safety, commercial and residential infrastructure, and the livelihoods of our community members. This agreement provides the avenue to grow both our operational skills in firefighting and our abilities in all-hazard incident management through participation in wildfire and all-hazard training and response.



**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT/ CUSTOMER RESEARCH:**

All residents and businesses benefit from having a fire department that is well trained and experienced in wildland firefighting given the increasing wildfire/WUI risks within our city.

**2025 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:**

**Equity and Accessibility: (Mandatory)**

**Livability: Equity Index Score:** Very High Opportunity

Increase positive public perception of safety and overall quality of life.

**Explain how your legislation will affect the selected indicator(s).**

By increasing TFD’s effectiveness in responding to wildland fires within the City, we will reduce carbon emissions generated by large wildfires, and thus improve air quality for our residents. Many of the areas within the City that are at the greatest risk for a WUI fire are within the Very Low to Moderate range on Tacoma’s Equity Index Map. For example: Snake Lake, Mullen Street Woods, Old South Tacoma Airport, Wapato Hills Park, Wapato Lake Park, Blueberry Park, Ryan’s Park, SR7 Gulch, McKinley Park, Swan Creek/Salishan and Pipeline Road.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

Presumably, your recommendation is not the only potential course of action; please discuss other alternatives or actions that City Council or staff could take. Please use table below.

Alternative(s)	Positive Impact(s)	Negative Impact(s)
1. Not enter into the proposed interlocal agreement	No changes would be made with this alternative, so there would be no positive impact.	No access to wildfire training opportunities through DNR and TFD resources would not be deployable with DNR in WA State for wildfire mobilization or nationwide for incident management team needs.
2.		
3.		

**EVALUATION AND FOLLOW UP:**

TFD will track the number of personnel trained to the Red Card standard and the number of TFD personnel deployed within the State of Washington for wildfires and nationwide for all-hazard Incident Management Teams (IMT). This information will be recorded annually.

**STAFF/SPONSOR RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends the City enter into a three-year interlocal agreement with the Washington State Department of Natural Resources as an avenue to grow both TFD’s operational skills in wildland firefighting and our abilities in all-hazard incident management.



**FISCAL IMPACT:**

There is a small investment for specific wildland firefighter equipment and PPE, and mobilization bag so that items can be stored and easily used for flight and deployment operations.

Fund Number & Name	COST OBJECT (CC/WBS/ORDER)	Cost Element	Total Amount
1. 0010 – General Fund	253000	5210400	\$2,100
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>\$2,100</b>

**What Funding is being used to support the expense?** Reimbursement from Washington State DNR and General Fund.

**Are the expenditures and revenues planned and budgeted in this biennium’s current budget?**

**NO, PLEASE EXPLAIN BELOW**

Expense for General Fund as shown above is budgeted.

Unknown total expense, based number of eligible employees who will participate. All expenses incurred will be transferred from the General Fund or EMS Fund to Fund 1090, where grant and most reimbursement-based TFD activities are tracked.

**Are there financial costs or other impacts of not implementing the legislation?**

**NO**

**Will the legislation have an ongoing/recurring fiscal impact?**

**YES**

**Will the legislation change the City’s FTE/personnel counts?**

**NO**

No new positions are needed for this program. All oversight, management and participation in the program will be done by positions currently within TFD.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- Interlocal agreement