

## STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS32299C2 / S1124

This legislation creates the "Wildfire Standard of Care Act" under Title 61, Chapter 18 to create a standard of care through electric utility wildfire mitigation plans, subject to approval by the Idaho Public Utilities Commission (IPUC) for regulated utilities. In recent years, wildfires have bankrupted utilities and driven their customers' monthly bills to crippling levels. In part, this is due to courts holding utilities liable for wildfire damages, despite a finding of fault or causation.

Many of Idaho's utilities, especially small and rural co-ops, could not survive those losses. Higher bills would harm Idaho's economy and place extreme burden on low- and fixed-income customers. The "Wildfire Standard of Care Act" protects customers and member-owners from the impacts of wildfire by empowering the IPUC to set clear and consistent expectations for utilities' wildfire mitigation efforts, holding utilities to a robust standard of care in operations, maintenance, repair, and upgrades, and outlining liabilities for utilities that fail to meet IPUC requirements. It also motivates federal agencies to promptly authorize wildfire mitigation work.

### FISCAL NOTE

The total cost of two new Full Time Positions (FTPs) to cover the workload for thirteen wildfire mitigation plans submitted by three investor-owned utilities and nine consumer-owned utilities is \$187,400 (\$182,800 ongoing and \$4,600 one-time). Costs are paid by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) Fund which is funded by collections from the regulated utilities and fees and assessments to the participating non-regulated utilities. No funds are allocated from the General Fund.

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**DISCLAIMER: This statement of purpose and fiscal note are a mere attachment to this bill and prepared by a proponent of the bill. It is neither intended as an expression of legislative intent nor intended for any use outside of the legislative process, including judicial review (Joint Rule 18).**