



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 21-228, **Version:** 1

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### A Resolution Approving an Intergovernmental Agreement for Wildfire Mitigation and Suppression Planning

**Presenter:**

Aram Benyamin, Chief Executive Officer, Colorado Springs Utilities

**Summary:**

Colorado Springs Utilities (“Utilities”) requests City Council approval of two separate intergovernmental agreements (“IGAs”) between the City of Colorado Springs on behalf of Utilities and Pueblo County, on behalf of the Pueblo County Sheriff’s Office (“PCSO”).

**Background:**

In order to comply with several United States Congressional land grants to the City of Colorado Springs related to watershed planning and protection, the Catamount Wildland Fire Team (“WFT”) was established within Colorado Springs Utilities. The Catamount WFT is a 50 plus volunteer fire team whose membership is comprised from CSU, Pikes Peak America’s Mountain and the City of Colorado Springs Public Works. The team is designed to provide wildland fire suppression support resources to help protect Utilities infrastructure and provide operational knowledge about Utilities’ system during disasters like wildland fires, floods, and windstorms. The Catamount WFT currently works with local fire protection districts, counties where Utilities’ has infrastructure, the State of Colorado, the U.S. Forest Service, and local military bases to protect Utilities’ infrastructure from these types of disasters.

In 2014, Utilities developed an internal team to work on formalizing agreements with various counties, local fire protection districts, and the local military bases to ensure that Catamount WFT resources are used to assist in the event of fires that could pose a risk to Utilities’ infrastructure and the Colorado Springs community. As part of this effort, Utilities’ has worked with Pueblo County to develop two IGAs related to: (1) wildland fire protection and incident response services and (2) wildland fire mitigation and suppression planning. The two IGAs work together to ensure that Utilities is an active part of fire-related mitigation and suppression planning with the Pueblo County’s Sheriff’s Office to identify key assets and areas that may require special treatment and also to ensure that Utilities’ Catamount WFT is able to provide additional support during fire events that place Utilities’ infrastructure at risk. The mitigation and suppression planning agreement further supports the requirements of § 29-20-105.5, C.R.S., which requires coordination between municipal utilities and the State and counties where a municipal utility owns infrastructure in the unincorporated area of a county.

**Previous Council Action:**

N/A

**Financial Implications:**

Entering into the IGAs is expected to help manage the cost associated with protection of Utilities' infrastructure from wildland fires through better planning and mitigation on the front end and by utilization of the Catamount WFT in the event of a fire. Where Utilities' WFT responds to fires in the community that do not involve City-owned, Utilities' controlled property, Utilities will be reimbursed based on State-approved rates. Where Utilities' Catamount WFT responds to fires on Utilities lands, the cost to Utilities will be reduced based on the value of resources provided by Utilities.

**City Council Appointed Board/Commission/Committee Recommendation:**

N/A

**Stakeholder Process:**

Utilities' staff worked with staff in the Pueblo County Sheriff's Office in the finalization of the attached IGAs.

**Alternatives:**

Approve the attached Resolutions or do not approve the attached Resolutions.

**Proposed Motion:**

Move approval of the proposed Resolution Approving an Intergovernmental Agreement for Wildfire Mitigation and Suppression.

N/A