119TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. _____

To require the Environmental Protection Agency to carry out a study to better understand the environmental impacts of wildland fires, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

Mr. SCHIFF introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on _____

A BILL

To require the Environmental Protection Agency to carry out a study to better understand the environmental impacts of wildland fires, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the ''Wildfire Pollution Research and Preparedness Act of 2026''.

SEC. 2. WILDLAND FIRE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS STUDY.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term ''Administrator'' means the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

(2) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term ''institution of higher education'' has the meaning given the term in section 101(a) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001(a)).

(3) WILDLAND FIRE.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term ''wildland fire'' means any non-structure fire that occurs in vegetation or natural fuels.

(B) INCLUSION.—The term ''wildland fire'' includes a wildfire originating from—

(i) an unplanned ignition; or

(ii) a prescribed fire.

(b) STUDY; REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall carry out, and submit to Congress and make publicly available a report describing the results of, a comprehensive study providing the science and describing the tools necessary—

(1) to support the reduction of environmental exposures and public health risks and the increase in community resilience, preparedness, response; and

(2) to support recovery efforts before, during, and after wildland fire events.

(c) REQUIREMENTS.—The study under subsection (b) shall seek to improve—

(1) air quality monitoring and modeling of emissions and harmful air pollutants emitted during or following a wildland fire;

(2) modeling of wildland fire smoke transport and evolution, including predicting the expected smoke emissions and population exposures resulting from a combination of a prescribed fire and a wildland fire;

(3) the understanding of the health effects associated with different smoke exposure patterns, especially in at-risk populations such as children, the elderly, and pregnant women, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of protective interventions;

(4) the understanding of smoke behaviors and movements to improve forecasting and how modeling can be used to improve early warning and evacuation decisionmaking;

(5) the understanding of how ash affects human health, including ash produced by a wildland fire in a wildland-urban interface, including—

(A) how toxicity of ash may vary depending on types of fuels, wildland fire characteristics, and composition of ash; and

(B) the identification and evaluation of the effectiveness of ash clean up and exposure-reduction methods;

(6) the understanding of how exposure to air toxics after fires may affect human health, especially fires in a wildland-urban interface that may burn structures or other human-made materials;

(7) the identification and evaluation of the effectiveness of remediation and exposure-reduction strategies after fires in the wildland-urban interface;

(8) the understanding of the deposition of smoke, ash, and toxic contaminants in drinking water infrastructure and sources of drinking water during and after a wildland fire, as well as the effectiveness of treatment methods to remove contaminants from water sources and infrastructure after a wildland fire;

(9) the understanding of the short-term and long-term impacts to ecosystem health and functions from the deposition of ash and smoke during and after a wildland fire, including—

(A) algal blooms, stream temperatures and water flows, fish habitats, and other watershed conditions; and

(B) any other potential effects on aquatic ecosystems following a wildland fire;

(10) the understanding of the impacts of the presence of heavy metals, such as lead and other harmful toxics, that may be deposited in soil in or around an area burned by a wildland fire, especially those occurring in the wildland-urban interface, including—

(A) concentration and depth of heavy metals and toxics; and

(B) an evaluation of the effectiveness of soil remediation methods;

(11) the understanding of the amount and effects of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (commonly referred to as ''PFAS'') released into air, land, and water media as a result of a wildland fire, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of methods to detect and remove those substances from affected air, land, and water;

(12) the understanding of the effects of smoke or exposure to any other harmful chemicals encoun-

tered during a wildland fire or a fire in the wildland-urban interface on firefighter health and safety; and

(13) the understanding of the composition of hazardous components in smoke from prescribed fires as compared to smoke from unplanned ignitions, including unplanned ignitions in the wildland-urban interface, and how risks to the environment might differ between unplanned ignitions versus prescribed fires.

(d) PRIORITIES.—In carrying out the study under subsection (b), the Administrator shall focus on areas where current research gaps exist and where additional science and tools are necessary to understand and address challenges related to the environmental and public health impacts of wildland fires.

(e) PARTNERSHIPS.—The Administrator may partner with 1 or more institutions of higher education to perform the research under subsection (b).

(f) PUBLIC COMMENT REQUIREMENT.—In conducting the study under subsection (b), the Administrator shall solicit and consider public comments.

(g) REPORT.—The report submitted to Congress under subsection (b) shall include recommendations for legislative or administrative action to address challenges

related to the environmental and public health impacts of wildland fires.