

UTAH WILDFIRE RESEARCH INSTITUTE ACT OF 2025

SEPTEMBER 15, 2025.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. WESTERMAN, from the Committee on Natural Resources,
submitted the following

R E P O R T

[To accompany H.R. 1045]

The Committee on Natural Resources, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 1045) to amend the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004 to require the establishment of an additional Institute under that Act, having considered the same, reports favorably thereon without amendment and recommends that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE OF THE LEGISLATION

The purpose of H.R. 1045 is to amend the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004 to require the establishment of an additional Institute under that Act.

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR LEGISLATION

The “Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004” established wildfire research centers in Arizona, Colorado, and New Mexico “to promote the use of adaptive ecosystem management to reduce the risk of wildfires, and restore the health of forest and woodland ecosystems, in the interior West.”¹ These centers, collectively known as the Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI), now operate at Colorado State University, New Mexico Highlands University, and Northern Arizona University.² Today, these centers conduct cutting-edge research on wildfires and forest management and collaborate with land managers to ensure the implementation of science-based forest management decisions.³ As part of this work, SWERI must produce annual, peer-reviewed,

¹ 16 U.S.C. § 6704.

² SWERI, “Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI),” <https://sweri.org/>.

³ *Id.*

scientific reports and develop work plans with the Secretary of Agriculture to ensure accountability.

Despite a long track record of being at the forefront of responsible resource management and forestry research, Utah is currently the only Four Corners State without a SWERI center. To address this disparity, H.R. 1045 would amend the “Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004” to create one additional SWERI center in the State of Utah.⁴ This legislation would provide Utah with additional resources to conduct research and collaborate on wildfire mitigation, forest management, and watershed restoration projects. Further, this legislation allows the State of Utah to leverage academic resources to collaborate with federal, state, and local stakeholders; develop adaptive forest management techniques; and implement fuel reduction strategies.⁵ A similar version of this legislation passed the Senate unanimously in the 118th Congress, and a companion bill has been introduced in the 119th Congress by Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee Chairman Mike Lee (R-UT).⁶

COMMITTEE ACTION

H.R. 1045 was introduced on February 6, 2025, by Representative Mike Kennedy (R-UT). The bill was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and within the Committee to the Subcommittee on Federal Lands. The bill was also referred to the Committee on Agriculture. On June 10, 2025, the Subcommittee on Federal Lands held a hearing on the bill. On July 23, 2025, the Committee on Natural Resources met to consider the bill. The Subcommittee on Federal Lands was discharged from further consideration of H.R. 1045 by unanimous consent. The bill was ordered favorably reported to the House of Representatives by unanimous consent.

HEARINGS

For the purposes of clause 3(c)(6) of House rule XIII, the following hearing was used to develop or consider this measure: hearing by the Subcommittee on Federal Lands held on June 10, 2025.

SECTION-BY-SECTION ANALYSIS

Section 1. Short title

Section 1 names the legislation the “Utah Wildfire Research Institute Act of 2025.”

Section 2. Additional institute

Section 2 amends the “Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004” to add Utah as a fourth location for a SWERI center, joining Arizona, New Mexico, and Colorado.

COMMITTEE OVERSIGHT FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Regarding clause 2(b)(1) of rule X and clause 3(c)(1) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, the Committee on

⁴*Id.*

⁵*Id.*

⁶S. 457, 119th Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/457>.

Natural Resources' oversight findings and recommendations are reflected in the body of this report.

COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE RULE XIII AND CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET ACT

1. *Cost of Legislation and the Congressional Budget Act.* Pursuant to clause 3(c)(2) of House rule XIII and section 308(a) of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, and pursuant to clause 3(c)(3) of House rule XIII and section 402 of the Congressional Budget Act of 1974, the Committee has requested but not received from the Director of the Congressional Budget Office a budgetary analysis and a cost estimate of this bill.

2. *General Performance Goals and Objectives.* As required by clause 3(c)(4) of rule XIII, the general performance goal or objective of this bill is to amend the Southwest Forest Health and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2004 to require the establishment of an additional Institute under that Act.

EARMARK STATEMENT

This bill does not contain any Congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined under clause 9(e), 9(f), and 9(g) of rule XXI of the Rules of the House of Representatives.

UNFUNDED MANDATES REFORM ACT STATEMENT

An estimate of federal mandates prepared by the Director of the Congressional Budget Office pursuant to section 423 of the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act was not made available to the Committee in time for the filing of this report. The Chair of the Committee shall cause such estimate to be printed in the Congressional Record upon its receipt by the Committee, if such estimate is not publicly available on the Congressional Budget Office website.

EXISTING PROGRAMS

Directed Rule Making. This bill does not contain any directed rule makings.

Duplication of Existing Programs. This bill does not establish or reauthorize a program of the federal government known to be duplicative of another program. Such program was not included in any report from the Government Accountability Office to Congress pursuant to section 21 of Public Law 111-139 or identified in the most recent Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance published pursuant to the Federal Program Information Act (Public Law 95-220, as amended by Public Law 98-169) as relating to other programs.

APPLICABILITY TO LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

The Committee finds that the legislation does not relate to the terms and conditions of employment or access to public services or accommodations within the meaning of section 102(b)(3) of the Congressional Accountability Act.

PREEMPTION OF STATE, LOCAL OR TRIBAL LAW

Any preemptive effect of this bill over state, local, or tribal law is intended to be consistent with the bill's purposes and text and the Supremacy Clause of Article VI of the U.S. Constitution.

CHANGES IN EXISTING LAW MADE BY THE BILL, AS REPORTED

In compliance with clause 3(e) of rule XIII of the Rules of the House of Representatives, changes in existing law made by the bill, as reported, are shown as follows (existing law proposed to be omitted is enclosed in black brackets, new matter is printed in italics, and existing law in which no change is proposed is shown in roman):

SOUTHWEST FOREST HEALTH AND WILDFIRE PREVENTION ACT OF 2004

* * * * *

SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF INSTITUTES.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, shall—

(1) not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, establish Institutes to promote the use of adaptive ecosystem management to reduce the risk of wildfires, and restore the health of forest and woodland ecosystems, in the interior West; and

(2) provide assistance to the Institutes to promote the use of collaborative processes and adaptive ecosystem management in accordance with paragraph (1).

(b) **LOCATION.**—

(1) **EXISTING INSTITUTES.**—The Secretary may designate an institute in existence on the date of enactment of this Act to serve as an Institute established under this Act.

(2) **STATES.**—Of the Institutes established under this Act, the Secretary shall establish 1 Institute in each of—

(A) the State of Arizona, to be located at Northern Arizona University;

(B) the State of New Mexico, to be located at New Mexico Highlands University, while engaging the full resources of the consortium of universities represented in the Institute of Natural Resource Analysis and Management (INRAM); **[and]**

(C) the State of Colorado~~...~~; *and*

(D) *the State of Utah.*

(c) **DUTIES.**—Each Institute shall—

(1) develop, conduct research on, transfer, promote, and monitor restoration-based hazardous fuel reduction treatments to reduce the risk of severe wildfires and improve the health of dry forest and woodland ecosystems in the interior West;

(2) synthesize and adapt scientific findings from conventional research to implement restoration-based hazardous fuel reduction treatments on a landscape scale using an adaptive ecosystem management framework;

(3) translate for and transfer to affected entities any scientific and interdisciplinary knowledge about restoration-based hazardous fuel reduction treatments;

(4) assist affected entities with the design of adaptive management approaches (including monitoring) for the implementation of restoration-based hazardous fuel reduction treatments; and

(5) provide peer-reviewed annual reports.

(d) QUALIFICATIONS.—Each Institute shall—

(1) develop and demonstrate capabilities in the natural, physical, social, and policy sciences; and

(2) explicitly integrate those disciplines in the performance of the duties listed in subsection (c).

(e) COOPERATION.—Each Institute may cooperate with—

(1) researchers and cooperative extension programs at colleges, community colleges, and universities in the States of Arizona, New Mexico, ~~and Colorado~~ *Colorado, and Utah* that have a demonstrated capability to conduct research described in subsection (c); and

(2) other organizations and entities in the interior West (such as the Western Governors' Association).

(f) ANNUAL WORK PLANS.—As a condition of the receipt of funds made available under this Act, for each fiscal year, each Institute shall develop in consultation with the Secretary, for review by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, an annual work plan that includes assurances, satisfactory to the Secretaries, that the proposed work of the Institute will serve the informational needs of affected entities.

(g) ESTABLISHMENT OF ADDITIONAL INSTITUTES.—If after 2 years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary finds that the Institute model established at the locations named in subsection (b)(2) would be constructive for other interior West States, the Secretary may establish 1 institute in each of those States.

* * * * *

GLENN THOMPSON, PENNSYLVANIA
CHAIRMAN

FRANK D. LUCAS, OKLAHOMA
AUSTIN SCOTT, GEORGIA, VICE CHAIRMAN
ERICA A. "HECK" CRAVYKOR, ARKANSAS
SCOTT DEJARIAS, TENNESSEE
DOLU LAMALTA, CALIFORNIA
DAVID HOUZER, NORTH CAROLINA
TRENT KELLY, MISSISSIPPI
DON BACON, NEBRASKA
MIKE ROST, ILLINOIS
DUSTY JOHNSON, SOUTH DAKOTA
JAMES R. BARD, INDIANA
TRACEY MAHA, KANSAS
RANDY FEENSTRA, IOWA
MARY E. MILLER, ILLINOIS
BARRY MOORE, ALABAMA
KAT CAMMACK, FLORIDA
BRAD FINTAB, MINNESOTA
JOHN W. ROSE, TENNESSEE
RONNY JACKSON, TEXAS
MONICA D. LA CRUZ, TEXAS
ZACHARY MURN, IOWA
DERICK VAN CIELEN, WISCONSIN
DAN NEWHOUSE, WASHINGTON
JOEY WILD, WISCONSIN
ROBERT P. BRESNAHAN, JR., PENNSYLVANIA
MARK S. WESSMER, INDIANA
MARK HARRIS, NORTH CAROLINA
DAVID J. TAYLOR, OHIO

COMMITTEE CORRESPONDENCE
U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Agriculture
Room 1301, Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6001
(202) 225-2171

September 3, 2025

ANGIE CRAIG, MINNESOTA
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

DAVID SCOTT, GEORGIA
JIM COSTA, CALIFORNIA
JAMES P. MCCOY, MASSACHUSETTS
ALMA S. ADAMS, NORTH CAROLINA
JAHANA WATTS, CONNECTICUT
SHONTLE M. BROWN, OHIO
VICE RANKING MEMBER
SHARICE DAVIS, KANSAS
ANDREA SALINAS, OREGON
DONALD G. DAVIS, NORTH CAROLINA
JILL N. TOKUDA, HAWAII
NICKI BUCCINELLI, ILLINOIS
ERIC SORENSON, ILLINOIS
GABE VASQUEZ, NEW MEXICO
JONATHAN L. JACKSON, ILLINOIS
SHRITHANESWAR, MICHIGAN
ADAM GRAY, CALIFORNIA
KRISTEN McDONALD RIVET, MICHIGAN
SHOWAN FIGURES, ALABAMA
EUGENE SIMON VREEMAN, VIRGINIA
JOSH RILEY, NEW YORK
JOHN W. MANNION, NEW YORK
APRIL MCLAREN DELANEY, MARYLAND
CHELLE P. NGORE, MAINE
SALUD O. CARBAJAL, CALIFORNIA

PARISH BRADEN,
STAFF DIRECTOR
BRIAN SCHWABA,
MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

The Honorable Bruce Westerman, Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

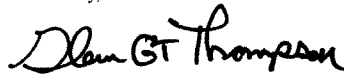
Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 1045, the "Utah Wildfire Research Institute Act of 2025." Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees, should it become necessary, and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 1045 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,



Glenn "GT" Thompson
Chairman

Cc: The Honorable Angie Craig, Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture
The Honorable Jared Huffman, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives
The Honorable Jason Smith, Parliamentarian, U.S. House of Representatives

BRUCE WESTERMAN OF ARKANSAS
CHAIRMAN

VIVIAN MOEGLEIN
STAFF DIRECTOR

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Natural Resources
Washington, DC 20515

JARED HUFFMAN OF CALIFORNIA
RANKING DEMOCRAT

ANA UNRUH COHEN
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

September 3, 2025

The Honorable Glenn Thompson
Chairman
Committee on Agriculture
1301 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Thompson:

I write regarding H.R. 1045, the "Utah Wildfire Research Institute Act of 2025," which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on July 23, 2025.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo further consideration of the bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 1045 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the *Congressional Record* during floor consideration of the bill and will include such letters in the committee report on H.R. 1045. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,



Bruce Westerman
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources

cc: The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker of the House
The Honorable Angie Craig, Ranking Member, Committee on Agriculture
The Honorable Jared Huffman, Ranking Member, Committee on Natural Resources
The Honorable Jason Smith, Parliamentarian

