

Legislative
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Bill 73

An Act respecting urban wildfires

Co-sponsors:

Mr. P. Tabuns

Ms J. Bell

MPP A. Gilmour

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Private Members' Bill

1st Reading November 20, 2025

2nd Reading

3rd Reading

Royal Assent



EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Bill enacts the *Protecting Ontario from Urban Wildfires Act, 2025*. The Act provides that the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks shall, no later than 90 days after the day the Act comes into force, establish an Urban Wildfires Advisory Committee. The Committee shall assess the growing risk of urban wildfires, both in terms of scale and expected timelines for when increased levels of risk will be reached. The Committee shall also develop recommendations for preventing, suppressing and recovering from urban wildfires and protecting the population from urban wildfires. Within one year of being established, the Committee shall report its assessment and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. Based on the Committee's assessment and recommendations, the Minister shall, along with other members of the Executive Council assigned by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, develop plans, and any legislation necessary for implementing those plans, related to protecting Ontario from urban wildfires and shall develop protocols for co-operation between urban and forest wildfire management and suppression forces.

An Act respecting urban wildfires

Preamble

Major fires in Los Angeles, Jasper and Fort McMurray, a near miss in London, England and wildfires in New York City parks have all made it clear that, in a world that is getting hotter at an increasing rate, we risk confronting urban wildfires in Ontario in a way not seen in the past century. Our plans for responding to potential urban wildfires should use a 2 degree Celsius increase in average global temperatures above pre-industrial temperatures within the next 15 years as the baseline for understanding the new conditions we will face.

Therefore, His Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Ontario, enacts as follows:

Urban Wildfires Advisory Committee

1 (1) The Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks shall, no later than 90 days after the day this section comes into force, establish an Urban Wildfires Advisory Committee.

Composition

(2) The Urban Wildfires Advisory Committee shall be composed of members appointed by the Minister in accordance with subsection (3).

Same

(3) The Minister shall ensure that the Urban Wildfires Advisory Committee includes members of the following groups:

1. Climate scientists.
2. Wildfire scientists.
3. Forest hydrologists.
4. The Office of the Fire Marshal.
5. Firefighter management and unions representing firefighters.
6. Environmental non-governmental organizations.
7. Authorities responsible for emergency management and civil protection.
8. Conservation authorities.
9. Specialists in the fields of disaster prevention and emergency management and recovery.
10. Representatives of municipal umbrella organizations such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association and the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities.
11. First Nations representatives who can bring First Nations fire management knowledge and ongoing knowledge of fire evacuation experiences.

Remuneration and expenses

(4) The Lieutenant Governor in Council may determine the remuneration and expenses of any person appointed under subsection (2).

Appropriation required

(5) Subsection (4) does not apply unless money has been appropriated by the Legislature for the purpose of that subsection.

Functions

2 (1) The Urban Wildfires Advisory Committee shall,

- (a) assess the growing risk of urban wildfires both in terms of scale and expected timelines for when increased levels of risk will be reached; and

- (b) develop recommendations for preventing, suppressing and recovering from urban wildfires and protecting the population from urban wildfires.

Report

(2) On or before the day that is one year after the day the Urban Wildfires Advisory Committee is established, the Committee shall report its assessment and recommendations to the Legislative Assembly.

Plans

3 (1) Based on the assessment and recommendations reported under subsection 2 (2), the Minister shall, on or before the day that is one year after the day the assessment and recommendations are reported under subsection 2 (2), along with other members of the Executive Council assigned by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, develop plans, and any legislation necessary for implementing those plans, that do the following:

1. Include any necessary changes to the following to allow for the effective prevention, suppression and recovery from urban wildfires and effective protection of the population from urban wildfires:
 - i. Regulations, including the Building Code and zoning and urban planning regulations.
 - ii. Legislation, including the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*, the *Forest Fires Prevention Act*, the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997* and the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
 - iii. Firefighting infrastructure.
 - iv. Emergency relief facilities and protocols for evacuation.
 - v. Requirements for the updating of municipal emergency response plans.
 - vi. Standard assessments of fire risk from forest types and from the wildland-urban interface.
2. Ensure the development of urban firefighting resources under the direction of the Government of Ontario to provide assistance to and training for existing urban firefighters.
3. Undertake the development of educational programs for urban dwellers in large and small municipalities regarding urban wildfire prevention and steps that individuals can take to reduce the risk they face.

Report re costs

(2) The Minister shall report to the Legislative Assembly the Minister's opinion regarding the amount of costs that should be covered by the Government of Ontario to deliver these programs and to assist municipalities in delivering these programs.

Protocols

(3) The Minister, along with other members of the Executive Council referred to in subsection (1), shall develop protocols for co-operation between urban and forest wildfire management and suppression forces.

Commencement

4 This Act comes into force on the day it receives Royal Assent.

Short title

5 The short title of this Act is the *Protecting Ontario from Urban Wildfires Act, 2025*.