

**Change Record Detail with Description (285)**  
**Department of Natural Resources**

**Scenario:** FY2016 Supplemental Feb1 (13216)  
**Component:** Fire Suppression Activity (AR N031) (2706)  
**RDU:** Fire Suppression, Land & Water Resources (602)

Scenario/Change Record Title	Trans Type	Totals	Personal Services	Travel	Services	Commodities	Capital Outlay	Grants, Benefits	Miscellaneous	Positions		
										PFT	PPT	NP
<b>FY2016 Supplemental Feb1</b>												
<b>FY2016 Wildland Fire Protection Declarations for Fall 2015</b>												
	Suppl	47,500.0	28,500.0	950.0	11,400.0	6,650.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0
1004 Gen Fund		47,500.0										

The initial FY2016 general fund appropriation for the Fire Suppression component was \$6,659.1 (Sec1 Ch23 SLA2015 P31 L14) which was insufficient to meet the state's statutory obligation to meet current obligations and provide wildland fire protection on state, municipal, and private lands in FY2016.

**2015 Fire Season Summary**

Alaska's 2015 wildland fire season was the second-largest fire season on record for the number of acres burned. More than 5.1 million acres burned in the summer of 2015 with a total of 770 fires, ranking behind only the record season of 2004 with nearly 6.6 million acres burned. In addition to the large number of acres burned, the 2015 fire season was historic in terms of the damage it caused. A total of 138 structures were either destroyed or damaged by wildfires, including the loss of 71 primary residences. The Sockeye Fire, which started on June 14, 2015 near Mile 77 of the Parks Highway, turned out to be Alaska's most devastating fire in more than two decades. The fire was initially attacked at just two acres but due to dry conditions, grew to more than 6,500 acres on the first day and destroyed dozens of homes. All totaled, 55 homes were destroyed and another 44 structures were damaged. It was the most destructive fire in Alaska since the Miller's Reach Fire in 1996.

Alaska experienced a record lightning bust during the week of June 19-25, 2015 with over 61,000 lightning strikes recorded around the state. The lightning bust produced 295 new fire starts in seven days.

Several rural villages were threatened by lightning caused fires. At one point, both the Yukon River villages of Tanana and Nulato were surrounded by fires. Many of the residents in those two villages were evacuated for an extended period of time. Residents in several other villages in Southwest Alaska, including Chathbaluk, Upper and Lower Kalskag, Aniak, and Red Devil were also evacuated due to fires encroaching on their villages. The large number of fires required significant resources to be imported from the contiguous United States and Canada. All totaled, more than 2,800 firefighting personnel were brought up to Alaska from 44 different states and two Canadian provinces. For the season, about 48 percent of the resources used to fight fires were based in Alaska and 52 percent came from other state, federal and Canadian sources. An estimated 700 Alaskan vendors were utilized providing aircraft, fuel, meals, lodging, supplies, equipment, rental vehicles and support services; injecting \$23.8 million into the economy.

The dry conditions and high fire activity kept Alaska at Preparedness Level 5, the highest level, for 24 straight days from June 20, 2015 to July 14, 2015. Fires were staffed continuously from May 16, 2015 to September 10, 2015. The peak of the season was June 29, 2015, when there were 45 fires staffed by 3,174 personnel. There were 42 days with more than 20 staffed fires in a day.

All available Alaska crews which included three hotshot crews, five Type 21A crews and 42 Type 2 crews, were utilized during the fire season. The Alaska crews were complemented by more than 100 crews including 33 hotshot, 49 Type 21A and 22 Type 2 crews imported from the contiguous United States. The state also utilized a record number of incident management teams (IMT) in 2015. There were 13 IMTs deployed in Alaska, two from Alaska and 11 from the contiguous United States. Most of the 11 teams were Type 2 while one was a hotshot crew and another was a Type 3. Division of Forestry managed fires that employed IMTs including Aggie Creek, Anaconda Creek, Card Street, Healy Lake, Rex Complex and Sockeye.

Of the total number of wildfires in 2015 in Alaska, 54 percent (354) were human caused and 46 percent (416) were started by lightning. Lightning caused fires accounted for the biggest chunk of the acreage burned (5.1 million acres) compared to the acreage burned by human caused fires (27,000 acres). For the

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<p>season, there were 68 fires estimated at more than 20,000 acres and 10 that were estimated at more than 100,000 acres.</p> <p>When heavy rain in late July and early August brought a halt to Alaska's fire season by the third week in August, firefighters turned their attention to the contiguous United States, which was also experiencing what turned out to be a record fire season. Alaska sent more than 1,100 firefighting personnel south to the contiguous United States to help with suppression efforts in California, Idaho, Oregon, Montana, Utah, Washington and Wyoming. That number included one Type 1 IMT, three hotshot crews, six Type 2IA crews, 25 Type 2 crews and more than 400 overhead personnel. In addition, Alaska also sent five air retardant tankers, one air tactical platform and four helicopters south to work in the contiguous United States. The costs of sending Forestry's resources to the contiguous United States to assist with firefighting efforts are reimbursable back to the state.</p> <p>It is difficult to predict the amount necessary for 2016 fire suppression activity. The estimate of \$47.5 million will be adjusted based on costs incurred through FY2016.</p>												
<b>Component Totals</b>		<b>47,500.0</b>	<b>28,500.0</b>	<b>950.0</b>	<b>11,400.0</b>	<b>6,650.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>