

Contracting Subcommittee Recommendations

3/28/08

1. COORDINATION AND COMMUNICATION GENERALLY

Recommend generally that the private contracting community and state, local, federal, and tribal fire suppression agencies maintain open communications and coordinate activities.

2. CONTRACTOR EQUIPMENT INSPECTION PROCESS

Recommend generally that the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group work with representatives from the private contracting community to increase the over-all efficiency of the equipment inspection process.

Note: The Subcommittee heard testimony that the state and federal fire suppression agencies will eliminate unnecessary inspections and that those agencies have pledged to increase the efficiency of the inspection process for future fire seasons.

3. FIRE SUPPRESSION TRAINING COORDINATION

Recommend that the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group work with representatives from the private contracting community where possible to conduct joint training sessions.

4. PRIVATE SUPPRESSION CONTRACTOR'S WORKERS' COMPENSATION ISSUES

Recommend that Department of Labor coordinate with the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group to ensure that private contractors working on the fire lines are complying with the workers' compensation laws.

Recommend that the State Fund and private insurance companies work with the fire suppression contracting community to ensure reasonable workers' compensation insurance rates.

Recommend that the FSIC write a letter to the Department of Labor and the State Fund requesting those agencies' involvement in solving these workers' compensation issues.

5. DISPATCHING PRIVATE CONTRACTING RESOURCES

Recommend FSIC support for the current Northern Rockies Coordinating Group dispatch system that utilizes the closest resource concept that involves local governments, state, federal and private contracting resources that is most cost effective and efficient for the taxpayers and local communities.

6. ORGANIZATION OF THE PRIVATE CONTRACTING COMMUNITY

Recommend that the fire suppression contracting community form at most, one or two associations (including the aviation contractors) to represent private contractors across the state and to provide one voice before the legislature and state and federal fire suppression agencies.

7. BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Recommend that the Montana Legislature and the federal fire suppression agencies increase the number of incident business advisors that are deployed on fires throughout Montana in order to improve the efficiency of deploying private contractors and tracking costs.

8. BEST VALUE CONTRACTING

Recommend FSIC support for the best value contracting process.

9. PERFORMANCE AUDIT

Recommend that the FSIC send a letter to the Legislative Audit Committee requesting a performance audit of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation's Aviation Program, including an evaluation of the need for additional helicopter managers.