



## Agenda Item

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**File #:** 23-0789

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**Requested Agenda Date:**

8/15/2023

**Requested Agenda Title:**

Consideration of Salt Lake County Warden Agreement 2023

R. Joseph Anderson, Wasatch Front Area Manager

**Requested Agenda Item Description:**

The Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands (FFSL), as directed by Utah Code (65A-8-101), is “responsible for fire management and the conservation of forest, watershed, and other lands - Reciprocal agreements for fire protection.” Over the last decade, FFSL has entered into cooperative agreements with county governments to assist with the cost of wildfire suppression if the county paid an “insurance premium” based on the average wildfire suppression cost over a period of 7 years, dropping the high and low years. Although this system seemed to work in some circumstances, wildfires since 2010 have brought to light the missing link: municipal governments with vast areas of incorporated wildlands could not participate in the wildfire suppression cost assistance system. The current system is based on the simple principle of risk reduction wherein the state will pay the costs of large and extended attack wildland fires (“catastrophic fires”) in exchange for local government providing initial attack and implementing prevention, preparedness, and mitigation actions that are proven to reduce the risk and costs of wildland fire in the long run.

Salt Lake County has been participating in the Utah Cooperative Wildfire System since its implementation in 2017 through a cooperative agreement outlined in Salt Lake County Resolution 5203, dated 6 June 2017. The Salt Lake County Emergency Management Division strongly recommends continued participation in the Utah Cooperative Wildfire System as a measure to protect Salt Lake County from high dollar loss associated with catastrophic wildfires. This participation commitment is based on two elements. This first is a wildfire risk assessment by acres conducted by Utah Forestry, Fire, and State Lands. The second element is the historic fire cost average.

Since 2017 the participation commitment for unincorporated Salt Lake County, as a shared cost with Davis County, has been \$27,966. New to 2023, based on population increases, the FFSL has assigned a fire warden solely to Salt Lake County. Signing the 2023 cooperative agreement will require a budget adjustment of \$23,452 to represent the updated agreement between Salt Lake County and Utah Forestry, Fire, and State Lands.

Corresponding budget adjustment is also included for approval.

**Requested Action:** Discussion - Vote Needed

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**Presenter(s) (with titles):** Tara Behunin, Associate Director of Salt Lake County Emergency Management.  
Joseph Anderson, Wasatch Front Area Manager of Utah Division of Forestry, Fire, and State Lands.

**Time Needed:** 10 MINS

**Is this Item Time-Sensitive and/or Requesting a Time-Certain?** No

**Requesting Staff Member:** Lisa Hartman, Associate Deputy Mayor

**Are Supporting Documents Needed for this Agenda Item Request?** Yes