

**Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control (DFPC)
Colorado Fire Commission (CFC)
CO-FIRE Subcommittee Meeting
January 12, 2026, 11:00 am - 12:30 pm
Virtual
Meeting Summary**

ATTENDANCE

Subcommittee: TJ Steck, Jess Solze, Bob Sullivan, Brad Danek, Brad Davidson, Chuck Balke, Hugo Ferchau, Matt Branch

Guests: Phill Veneris

DFPC: Katie Lobodzinski, Paris Orona

ACTION ITEMS

Subcommittee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review documents 1, 4, and 6 in Matt's shared drive before the 1/9 meeting.
Katie	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Set next subcommittee meeting.Share meeting summary, presentations, and vision document with the group
Jess, TJ, Katie	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Integrate feedback from the Fire Commission into project planning

OVERVIEW

This meeting included two presentations: one about CAL FIRE's history and structure, and another on potential solutions for bolstering fire service coverage in Colorado. The group discussed these presentations and next steps for the subcommittee.

[PRESENTATION: "CAL FIRE HISTORY AND STRUCTURE", PHILL VENERIS](#)

Phill explained CAL FIRE's origins in 1885, its evolution into a state fire department, and its current dual role in providing both wildland and structural fire protection. He detailed the differences between Schedule A and Schedule B employees, as well as the concept of contract counties. The presentation covered CAL FIRE's response goals, staffing, and the cooperative agreements it has with local governments.

[PRESENTATION: "SECURING THE FUTURE OF FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES", MATT BRANCH](#)

[Supplemental materials](#)

Matt presented a comprehensive proposal for enhancing fire services in Colorado, outlining three main pillars: building career and technical education programs, modernizing resources, and bolstering fire marshal services and mutual aid. The proposal includes plans for staffing 32 state fire stations, providing \$8.2 million for grants, and creating a state apparatus program for retired

vehicles. Wilson estimated a one-time startup cost of \$300 million and ongoing annual investments of \$126 million. The presentation concluded with an open invitation for questions and discussion on next steps.

- Brad and others shared experiences with volunteer programs transitioning to reserves and the challenges of funding public safety.
- Chuck raised concerns about PILT funds allocation.
- The group suggested exploring alternative funding sources, such as a potential tax on gasoline.
- The group agreed to focus on soliciting feedback from the Fire Commission at the 1/15 meeting
 - TJ emphasized the need to effectively communicate the importance of the proposed funding.
 - The group planned to ask the Commission how they should consider emergency services in their work.

NEXT STEPS

The group will integrate feedback from the Fire Commission into its future work. Ahead of the next subcommittee meeting, the group will review resources from Matt for discussion.