

**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**

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

**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.