

By: Workman

H.R. No. 964

R E S O L U T I O N

1           WHEREAS, Most of Texas is suffering extreme drought, and the  
2 state climatologist has warned that the forecast tilts toward a  
3 continuing rainfall deficit and higher temperatures that increase  
4 the risk of intense wildfires; and

5           WHEREAS, In 2011, nearly 3,000 homes in Texas were lost to  
6 wildfires; the Bastrop County Complex fire alone destroyed over  
7 1,600 homes, burned more than 34,000 acres, and resulted in losses  
8 of \$400 million, while claiming two lives; and

9           WHEREAS, Prolonged drought conditions are now bringing  
10 wildfires even to communities that may not have experienced this  
11 hazard in recent memory; over the past two years, 85 percent of  
12 wildfires in Texas have occurred within two miles of an established  
13 community; moreover, the majority of new development in Texas is  
14 occurring at the wildland-urban interface, where homes and other  
15 structures intersect with undeveloped areas that contain flammable  
16 grass, brush, and trees; and

17           WHEREAS, The National Fire Protection Association drew on  
18 research in physical fire science and human behavior to create the  
19 Firewise Communities program, which encourages local solutions for  
20 wildfire safety; the program teaches people how to adapt to living  
21 with wildfire and how to collaborate effectively to help protect  
22 people and property; working with partners such as state forestry  
23 and local fire departments, program participants plan, organize,  
24 and conduct activities that improve their wildfire safety, and each

1 community can address its specific needs using a flexible template;  
2 the Texas A&M Forest Service supports the program in this state  
3 through its educational initiatives and by providing a staff of  
4 wildland-urban interface specialists to advise applicants and  
5 members; and

6 WHEREAS, Since 2003, this voluntary program has documented  
7 over \$76 million in local wildfire safety measures; more than 700  
8 communities in 40 states are active members, and in Texas, nearly 60  
9 communities have received the Firewise designation by obtaining a  
10 risk assessment, creating an action plan, conducting a public  
11 education event, and completing a community project that decreases  
12 the threat of wildfire; and

13 WHEREAS, Wildfires are a growing source of concern across the  
14 Lone Star State due to extended drought and rapid urbanization, but  
15 residents can reduce the risk to lives and property by taking  
16 meaningful action through membership in Firewise Communities; now,  
17 therefore, be it

18 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives of the 83rd Texas  
19 Legislature hereby encourage participation in the National Fire  
20 Protection Association's Firewise Communities program; and, be it  
21 further

22 RESOLVED, That the chief clerk of the House of  
23 Representatives forward official copies of this resolution to Texas  
24 Community Association Advocates, to the Texas Association of  
25 Counties, and to the Texas Municipal League.