

# ***NEW JERSEY STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION***

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## **Legislative Committee**

**March 13, 2025**

To all members of the Legislative Committee, the total number of bills introduced is 10,363 already for this session. There were 5 new bills added since the last report. I added two new bills to our tracking list, Fire & Emergency Services, A-5431/S-4257, which establishes Forest Fire Preparedness Commission in DEP (see attached). The total number of our tracked bills is now at 309, with 178 bills in Fire & Emergency Services, 73 bills in Firemen's Home, and 58 bills in Pensions. There are currently twelve bills sitting on The Governor's Desk waiting to be signed. The Governor signed one hundred fifty-one bills into law to date.

Some of our tracked bills is listed to be heard on Monday, March 17, 2025, in the Senate Budget and appropriations Committee and the Assembly Environment, Natural Resources and Solid Waste Committee (see attached).

There are a bunch of Assembly and Senate Budget meetings listed on the schedule for the next two weeks. There is an Assembly Quorum for Thursday, March 20, 2025, on the schedule but they have not listed the committees that will meet or the list of bills to be heard yet.

Respectfully Submitted,



**Brian E. Martone**  
Legislative Committee Chairman  
First Assistant Secretary  
New Jersey State Firemen's Association  
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**Bill Number** A5431 of 2024-2025 Session

**Summary** Establishes Forest Fire Preparedness Commission in DEP.

**Sponsors** Fantasia (R24)

**Subjects** Commissions • Environment

**Related** ☆ 2024:S4257

**Status** 03/10/2025 - Assembly Public Safety and Preparedness Committee

**Scheduled** Not Scheduled

**Progress** 1st House:  I  C  2R  P — 2nd House:  C  2R  P —  G  PL

**History** 03/10/2025 - Introduced and referred to Assembly Public Safety and Preparedness Committee

**Meetings** None

**News** None

**Bill Text** 03/11/2025 - Introduced (4 pages)

**Votes** None

**Tracking** Add to tracking list

**Comments** Add comment for this bill



**Bill Number** ★ S4257 of 2024-2025 Session

**Summary** Establishes Forest Fire Preparedness Commission in DEP.

**Sponsors** Testa (R1)

**Subjects** Commissions • Environment

**Related** ★ 2024:A5431

**Status** 03/03/2025 - Proposed for introduction

**Scheduled** Not Scheduled

**Progress** 1st House:  I  C  2R  P — 2nd House:  C  2R  P —  G  PL

**History** None

**Meetings** None

**News** None

**Bill Text** None

**Votes** None

**Tracking** List – Fire & Emergency Services [ Edit | Delete ]

 Add to another tracking list

**Comments**  Add comment for this bill

**ASSEMBLY, No. 5431**

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**STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

**221st LEGISLATURE**

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INTRODUCED MARCH 10, 2025

**Sponsored by:**  
**Assemblywoman DAWN FANTASIA**  
**District 24 (Morris, Sussex and Warren)**

**SYNOPSIS**

Establishes Forest Fire Preparedness Commission in DEP.

**CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT**

As introduced.



A5431 FANTASIA

2

1 AN ACT establishing a Forest Fire Preparedness Commission in the  
2 Department of Environmental Protection.

3

4 BE IT ENACTED by the Senate and General Assembly of the State  
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. a. There is established, in the Department of Environmental  
8 Protection, the "Forest Fire Preparedness Commission."

9 b. The commission shall consist of 20 members, as follows:

10 (1) the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, ex officio, or  
11 the commissioner's designee, who shall serve as chairperson;

12 (2) the State Firewarden appointed pursuant to R.S.13:9-7, ex  
13 officio, or the State Firewarden's designee;

14 (3) the three division forest firewardens appointed pursuant to  
15 R.S.13:9-7, ex officio, or the firewardens' designees;

16 (4) the Director of the Division of Fire Safety in the Department  
17 of Community Affairs, or the director's designee;

18 (5) the New Jersey State Police Superintendent, ex officio, or the  
19 superintendent's designee;

20 (6) the Director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife, ex officio,  
21 or the director's designee; and

22 (7) 12 members appointed by the Commissioner of  
23 Environmental Protection no later than 60 days after the effective  
24 date of this act, including:

25 (a) three district forest firewardens employed by the State Forest  
26 Fire Service;

27 (b) one member of the Highlands Water Protection and Planning  
28 Council established pursuant to section 4 of P.L.2004, c.120  
29 (C.13:20-4);

30 (c) one member of the Pinelands commission established  
31 pursuant to section 4 of P.L.1979, c.11 (C.13:18A-4);

32 (d) one member of the Fish and Game Council;

33 (e) one officer of the New Jersey Forestry Association;

34 (f) four members of State, regional, county, or municipal  
35 firefighting or other emergency response organizations; and

36 (g) one member of the public with knowledge or experience in  
37 managing woodlands.

38 c. The Forest Fire Preparedness Commission shall hold its initial  
39 meeting as soon as practicable, but no later than 90 days after the  
40 effective date of this act. The commission shall meet no less than  
41 six times per year at such places and times as the chairperson may  
42 designate. The commission shall hold a minimum of two annual  
43 public hearings. The chairperson may appoint a secretary who need  
44 not be a member of the commission. A majority of the membership  
45 of the commission shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of  
46 commission business.

47 d. The Forest Fire Preparedness Commission shall meet with  
48 key stakeholders, advocates, and experts, and shall consult with

1 policy experts in firefighting, forest fire mitigation techniques,  
2 forest stewardship, emergency response, environmental science, or  
3 other applicable fields.

4 e. The Department of Environmental Protection shall provide  
5 professional, stenographic, and clerical staff to the commission, as  
6 may be necessary for the Forest Fire Preparedness Commission to  
7 carry out its duties. The commission shall also be entitled to call  
8 upon the services of any State, county, or municipal department,  
9 board, commission, or agency, as may be available to it for its  
10 purposes.

11 f. The duties of the Forest Fire Preparedness Commission shall  
12 be to carry out an audit of the State's readiness to prevent, mitigate,  
13 and respond to wildfires, and to establish protocols to ensure that  
14 municipal, county, regional, and State emergency response  
15 organizations, including police, firefighting, and medical  
16 responders, communicate regularly and effectively so that they  
17 carry out a coordinated and effective response to any wildfires in  
18 the State. To carry out these duties, the commission shall:

19 (1) review the existing the State forest fire plan prepared  
20 pursuant to P.L.1955, c.224 (C.32:24-1 et seq.);

21 (2) review the provisions of the Middle Atlantic Interstate Forest  
22 Fire Protection Compact entered into pursuant to P.L.1955, c.224  
23 (C.32:24-1 et seq.);

24 (3) review any relevant local or regional forest management  
25 plans or fire prevention plans;

26 (4) conduct an audit of the current readiness of the State to  
27 prevent, mitigate, and respond to wildfires, with particular attention  
28 paid to areas that have the potential to threaten lives and property,  
29 and including an assessment of the efficacy of the use of controlled  
30 burns in the State;

31 (5) provide recommendations to the Governor and to the  
32 Legislature pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164 (C.52:14-19.1)  
33 regarding changes to State protocols, regulations, and laws that  
34 would increase the State's ability to prevent, mitigate, and respond  
35 to wildfires;

36 (6) develop a comprehensive roadmap to be utilized by State,  
37 regional, county, and local emergency responders, including  
38 firefighters, police, and medical responders, in order to coordinate  
39 their responses to wildfires; and

40 (7) develop standardized lines of communication among the  
41 State Forest Fire Service and State, regional, county, and municipal  
42 emergency response organizations for the purposes of wildfire  
43 response;

44 (8) review and update, if necessary, evacuation protocols during  
45 wildfire emergencies; and

46 (9) develop a plan by which firefighting planes and helicopters  
47 can ensure access to a constant supply of suitable water to be used  
48 for firefighting purposes.

A5431 FANTASIA

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1 g. No later than two years after the effective date of this act, the  
2 Forest Fire Preparedness Commission shall submit a final report to  
3 the Governor and, pursuant to section 2 of P.L.1991, c.164  
4 (C.52:14-19.1), to the Legislature on the findings, plans,  
5 recommendations, and activities of the commission, including a  
6 copy of the final response roadmap developed pursuant to  
7 paragraph (6) of subsection f. of this section and a summary of the  
8 standardized lines of communication developed pursuant to  
9 paragraph (7) of subsection f. of this section.

10 h. The Forest Fire Preparedness Commission shall be dissolved  
11 30 days after it produces the report required pursuant to subsection  
12 g. of this section.

13

14 2. This act shall take effect immediately and shall expire 30 days  
15 after the Forest Fire Preparedness Commission produces the report  
16 required pursuant to subsection g. of section 1 of this act.

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STATEMENT

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21 This bill would establish a "Forest Fire Preparedness  
22 Commission" in the Department of Environmental Protection.

23 The commission would be composed of 20 members, including  
24 the Commissioner of Environmental Protection, the State  
25 Firewarden, and the Superintendent of the State Police, or their  
26 designees, and representatives of local emergency response  
27 organizations. The commission would be charged with various  
28 duties related to ensuring that the State is prepared to respond in a  
29 timely and effective manner to wildfires, including:

30 (1) performing a comprehensive audit of the State's current  
31 protocols related to wildfire response;

32 (2) developing a comprehensive roadmap that may be utilized by  
33 State, regional, county, and local emergency responders, including  
34 firefighters, police, and medical responders, in order to coordinate  
35 their responses to wildfires; and

36 (3) developing standardized lines of communication among the  
37 State Forest Fire Service and State, regional, county, and municipal  
38 emergency response organizations for the purposes of wildfire  
39 response.

40 The bill would require the commission to produce a report that  
41 produces its findings, plans, recommendations, and activities no  
42 later than two years after the bill's enactment, after which the Forest  
43 Fire Preparedness Commission would dissolve.



Monday, March 17, 2025

**Assembly Military and Veterans Affairs Committee, 10:00a, 4th Floor, Committee Room 13, Annex.**  
The committee will receive testimony from invited guests concerning the issues facing women veterans.

**Senate, 10:00a Committees at Call of Senate President; 12:00p Quorum Call.**

**Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee, 10:00a, 1st Floor, Committee Room 4, Annex.**

★ **S3098** Requires health insurers to provide coverage for biomarker testing.

**Tracking:** *Fire & Emergency Services — Support*

★ **S3812** Removes certain limitations on receipt of retirement or death benefits under PFRS.

**Tracking:** *Pensions*

**Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee, 10:00a, 1st Floor, Committee Room 1, Annex. (Revised 03/11/2025)**

**Senate Education Committee, 10:00a, 1st Floor, Committee Room 6, Annex.**

For discussion only: S-1778, S-3141

**Senate Transportation Committee, 10:00a, 3rd Floor, Committee Room 10, Annex.**

For discussion only: S-3450

**Assembly, Committees at Call of the Speaker; 1:00p Quorum.**

**Assembly Aging and Human Services Committee, 1:00p, 4th Floor, Committee Room 15, Annex.**

**Assembly Environment, Natural Resources and Solid Waste Committee, 1:00p, 3rd Floor, Committee Room 9, Annex.**

For discussion only: A-4679

★ **A5195** Requires manufacturer of certain firefighting equipment containing perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances to provide written notice to purchaser; prohibits sale, manufacture, and distribution of certain firefighting equipment containing intentional

**Tracking:** *Fire & Emergency Services*

**Senate Environment and Energy Committee, 1:00p, 3rd Floor, Committee Room 10, Annex. (Revised 03/12/2025)**





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**LEGISLATIVE TRACKING SERVICE**

Thursday, March 20, 2025

**Assembly, Committees at Call of the Speaker; Quorum.**

**New Jersey Law Revision Commission, 4:30p, Law Offices of Porzio, Bromberg & Newman, P.C., 100 Southgate Parkway, Morristown, NJ 07962-1997.**

Consideration of memorandums and reports.

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