



Talking Points on the Critical Importance of Including the Center of Excellence for Advanced Technology Aerial Firefighting in the Current Legislation

The need to establish the Center of Excellence can be captured in two words: *sustainment* and *improvement*. The standup of the Colorado Firefighting Air Corps provides the opportunity to address these challenges while simultaneously providing better firefighting capabilities. Additionally, the Center of Excellence (COE) will quickly become self-sustaining, generating grant revenue, creating jobs, increasing tax revenues, and making Colorado the hub for advancement of a global industry. To leave it out of the bill would be a serious mistake if we seek a long term solution to Colorado's fire challenge.

COE Mission Statement. *To improve and sustain protection of the public by enhancing firefighting effectiveness through innovation in the technology, tactics, regional collaboration, and economics of aerial resources.*

Key Points

- The current bill includes a relatively small amount (271K) that has tremendous return on investment by ensuring the sustainment and improvement on the initial CFAC investment.
- The COE will provide the “back end” of the legislation to close the loop on utilizations techniques, cost effectiveness and tactical improvements. One example would be the ability to provide streamlined training and acceptance of the multitude of agricultural aircraft/pilots already here in the state that currently lack the certification for firefighting.
- The COE will generate jobs and tax revenue by incentivizing private sector aerial firefighting companies to test, develop, and gain approval for new technologies here in Colorado.
- The COE is not a “study generator” or “think tank.” It is an integral piece of the day to day operations designed to insure the new resources are being used and paid for in the most effective and efficient manner.

- The COE will likely generate more dollars than it costs, through grants and public and private partnerships. Many donors have tentatively committed to providing funding if the state includes it in the bill. Federal and local governments have already expressed support for providing FTEs from their resource pool to participate.
- Fire Chiefs across the state have been briefed on the concept and fully support it as a “critical piece of the long term solution.”

The COE will provide a science-based means to improve of fundamental contributors to aerial firefighting: effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. The primary areas of expertise are envisioned as:

- Technology. The COE would serve as a research and development incubator for evaluating new and existing technologies for aerial firefighting. For example, testing technologies and tactics that would expand aerial firefighting into night operations which could conceivable double the effectiveness of existing resources and overcome wind event restrictions that exists in daylight hours on many wind driven fires.
- Tactics. The COE would allow veteran firefighters the opportunity to evaluate new and existing technologies for integration into tactical fire scenarios in a variety of settings (night operations, WUI, IA, transition, large fire, etc.).
- Economics. Sustainable contracting and value propositions would be explored to assess which technologies and contract vehicles are most advantageous for the firefighter and taxpayer.
- Military rapid response and integration. The COE would look at streamlining and synergizing access to and utilization of military aerial firefighting resources.
- Regional collaboration. The COE would evaluate and seek the means to bring other Western States into the effort to share the costs and resources of the wildland fire