

Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Act

Senators Alex Padilla (D-Calif.) and Tim Sheehy (R-Mont.)

As recent natural disasters have shown us, catastrophic wildfires have become an existential threat to the safety of communities. Over the past two decades, wildfires across the West have increasingly grown in size and severity. The federal government has a responsibility to treat these wildfires with the same level of seriousness as hurricanes and other natural disasters while empowering communities to implement science-based methods for mitigating wildfire damage and defending life and property.

What the *Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Act* would do:

- Establish guidelines for communities to conceptualize new Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Plans (CPWRP) that are developed in coordination with community members, first responders, and relevant state agencies. CPWRPs will focus on implementing strategies and activities relating to:
 - Improving early detection technology, public outreach and education, alerts and warnings, evacuation planning, evacuation execution, and access for first responders
 - Addressing vulnerable populations, including the elderly and those with disabilities
 - Hardening critical infrastructure and homes
 - Applying community-scale defensible space across contiguous areas
 - Building local capacity to implement and oversee the plan
 - Deploying distributed energy resources like microgrids with battery storage
 - Implementing strategic land use planning
 - Educating community members
 - Coordinating with existing wildfire plans like a Community Wildfire Protection Plan.
- Provide grants of up to \$250,000 to develop a CPWRP and grants of up to \$10 million to implement a CPWRP.
- Complete a report on all federal authorities and programs to protect communities from wildfires.
- Study how a CPWRP could be used as certification for insurance companies assessing community resilience.
- Continuously update wildfire hazard maps.
- Assess impediments to emergency radio communications across departments and agencies.
- Allow structure hardening to be covered under existing community wildfire protection programs.