

2026 -- H 8571

=====  
LC006474  
=====

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

HOUSE RESOLUTION

DECLARING MAY 2026 AS "WILDFIRE AWARENESS MONTH" IN THE STATE OF  
RHODE ISLAND

Introduced By: Representatives Cotter, Blazejewski, Kazarian, Chippendale, Place,  
Kennedy, Shallcross Smith, Ajello, Bennett, and Fogarty

Date Introduced: May 21, 2026

Referred To: House read and passed

1 WHEREAS, Wildfires across the United States have become more frequent and severe  
2 due to drought, rising temperatures, and changing climate conditions, demonstrating a nationwide  
3 need for prevention and preparedness; and

4 WHEREAS, While wildfire activity is most concentrated in western and southeastern  
5 regions of the United States, wildfire risk is increasingly recognized as a nationwide concern as  
6 climate and land-use conditions continue to expand fire-prone environments; and

7 WHEREAS, The State of Rhode Island experiences conditions that elevate wildfire risk,  
8 including seasonal dryness, wind events, and fuel accumulation in forested and suburban areas;  
9 and

10 WHEREAS, According to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management  
11 (DEM), Rhode Island experienced more than 60 reported wildfires in 2025, demonstrating that  
12 wildfire risk remains an ongoing concern within the State; and

13 WHEREAS, Wildfires pose threats to public safety, property, air quality, ecosystems, and  
14 public health through exposure to harmful smoke and fine particulate matter; and

15 WHEREAS, The DEM, through its Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment and  
16 Forest Fire Program, serves as the State's lead agency for wildfire prevention, preparedness,  
17 response coordination, and forest fire management; and

18 WHEREAS, The DEM Forest Fire Program provides wildfire suppression support,  
19 firefighter training, public education, interagency coordination, and wildfire mitigation strategies

1 to reduce wildfire risk statewide; and

2 WHEREAS, The DEM Forest Fire Program also supports forest health and wildfire risk  
3 reduction through forest management practices, including prescribed fires conducted under strict  
4 safety protocols to reduce hazardous fuel loads; and

5 WHEREAS, During periods of elevated wildfire danger caused by conditions such as low  
6 humidity, dry fuels, and strong winds, the DEM may issue fire weather advisories, including Fire  
7 Weather Watches and Red Flag Warnings, and may coordinate restrictions on outdoor burning  
8 and fire-related activities to protect public safety; and

9 WHEREAS, Wildfire prevention depends on public awareness and responsible behavior,  
10 including safe outdoor burning practices, proper disposal of smoking materials, safe equipment  
11 use, and compliance with fire restrictions; and

12 WHEREAS, Wildfire preparedness in Rhode Island requires coordinated planning among  
13 state and local partners, including emergency response planning, firefighter training, and  
14 community risk reduction in forested and suburban areas; and

15 WHEREAS, Residents are encouraged to prepare for wildfire emergencies by developing  
16 evacuation plans, assembling emergency kits, monitoring alerts, and maintaining defensible space  
17 around homes; and

18 WHEREAS, Wildfire Awareness Month provides an opportunity to promote wildfire  
19 prevention and preparedness and to recognize firefighters, emergency responders, and public  
20 safety officials who help protect Rhode Island communities; now, therefore be it

21 RESOLVED, That this House of Representatives of the State of Rhode Island hereby  
22 recognizes and declares May 2026 as “Wildfire Awareness Month” in the State of Rhode Island;  
23 and be it further

24 RESOLVED, That the Secretary of State be and hereby is authorized and directed to  
25 transmit duly certified copies of this resolution to the Rhode Island Department of Environmental  
26 Management and to the Honorable Lieutenant Governor of Rhode Island, Sabina Matos.

=====  
LC006474  
=====