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(Neb.)-Debate Begins On Nebraska Wildfire Control Bill



By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 03/21/2013 12:06 PM

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Lawmakers have begun to debate a bill that would pour new firefighting resources into central and western Nebraska, areas that experienced massive summer wildfires last year.

Sen. Al Davis of Hyannis presented his priority bill Thursday to the full Legislature. The measure would place aerial tankers in Valentine and Chadron during fire season, require the state to thin forests, and offer new training to emergency responders, among other steps.

Nebraska experienced 1,570 wildfires last year that burned a total of 786 square miles. Many of the fires are blamed on eastern red cedar trees, which are invasive and highly flammable.

Lawmakers did not get to vote on the bill Thursday. Discussion will continue when lawmakers return to the Capitol on Monday.