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(Neb.)- Heineman: Neb. Should Control Firefighting Planes



By: Jeremy Anderson Posted at: 04/15/2013 02:13 PM

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) - Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman says state emergency officials should have direct control over airplanes that could be stationed in Chadron and Valentine to fight wildfires.

Heineman said Monday he doesn't believe the planes should be overseen by the federal government or the Nebraska Forest Service. His comments came in response to a question about a bill in the Legislature, the Nebraska Wildfire Control Act of 2013.

The bill has undergone several revisions since it was introduced. The most recent version would require the Nebraska Forest Service to contract for the planes. The forest service is an agency within the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Heineman says state emergency officials need operational control of the planes to maintain a clear chain-of-command when coordinating their response to fires.