



February 19, 2025

Mr. Mark Carney
Candidate for Leader of the Liberal Party of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Mr. Carney,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC), the national association representing the country's fire chiefs and their 3,200 fire departments either through individual members or through a national advisory council of all provincial, territorial, and national affiliate fire chief related organizations, we would like to thank and congratulate you for putting your name forward in the Liberal Leadership race. Your willingness to lead in turbulent times is a testament to your 'values' and 'what you value'. We wish you every success in your leadership bid.

Mr. Carney, any Prime Minister elected in the coming weeks or any leader coming into power in the Spring, could face a wildfire season that is both predictable and unprecedented. We will need to work together. As such, our recommendations to you, in order of importance, are as follows:

1. Install a [national fire administration](#) with the country's fire chiefs as early as the Spring of 2025 to help coordinate advice to federal departments who have fire and life safety issues in their portfolios and to optimize the federal response to emergency in the event that it is needed.
2. Stimulate investment in [fire and life safety equipment](#) matched by other levels of government. This would not only strengthen local communities' response to any type of emergency but also strengthen the federal governments internal defense spending goals.

A National Fire Administration would serve a coordinating function between all federal policy departments that may have a potential fire and life safety issue in its blind spot, such as housing, infrastructure, transportation, climate, explosives, among others. It would also assist in the federal response to emergencies if called upon by drawing on the willingness of fire departments in parts of the country that are not impacted.

The cost of establishing a National Fire Administration would be about \$2.4 million dollars. Fire Chiefs would offer the infrastructure of the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) which would connect the federal government to members' expertise. This is not a jurisdictional issue. Most fire departments in this country are volunteer and part of local governments. Nearly every other comparator country has such an administration.

As evidence of need, consider data from CAFC's [Great Canadian Fire Census](#), the country's largest and most comprehensive database of information about Canada's fire departments. The Census shows the following:

- **Lack of emergency resources to support housing development:** 69% in urban centres reported significant new housing starts, yet only 17% (less than 1 in 5) have any new resources
- **Almost half of communities at risk of downgraded fire protection rating:** 46% of communities are at risk of downgraded fire protection ratings due in part to aging equipment.

- **Wildfire readiness:** 9 in 10 fire departments have some involvement in wildfire response in the past year, yet only half had the required equipment to meet the needs for wildfire season
- **Aging equipment:** 56% of fire departments have deferred essential equipment purchases, close to 25% are using equipment that has surpassed industry standards by 10-20 years.
- **Funding flow issues:** Only 18% benefited from the federal funding of wildfire equipment to provinces and territories.
- **Fireworks and lithium-ion battery fires:** new pressures from electric vehicle and other lithium-ion battery fires and disjointed explosives regulations are compounding risks. Canada had over 400 of each of these types of fires last year.

We believe establishing a National Fire Administration could be one of the most consequential policy instruments in the history of fire and emergency management in Canada. It will allow Canada to recognize, address and coordinate, on a regular, systematic, and national basis, all fire and emergency management issues.

Once a National Fire Administration is established, it could help the government structure a cost shared fire and emergency equipment fund that would not only strengthen our capacity for emergency response, but also Canadian industry and contribute to strengthening Canada's internal defense spending.

Mr. Carney, if you accept our recommendation, the Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs (CAFC) will assist you in making it a success. If you have any questions at all, we would be happy to discuss these with you. You or your staff can reach us through CAFC's Executive Director, Dr. Tina Saryeddine, tsaryeddine@cafc.ca, 613-324-1078.

Thank you again for your leadership and service to our country at such a critical time. Again, we wish you every success. We look forward to meeting you and to serving as trusted and reliable advisors.

Sincerely,



Ken McMullen
President Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs
Fire Chief and Director of Emergency Services, Red Deer, AB