



MEDIA BACKGROUNDER

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Climate change, wildfires and the role of Canada's military helicopters

The impact of climate change on wildfires

Over the past few years, fire seasons have started to exhibit the effects of climate change. Drought-stressed trees, which are far less resistant to fire, have produced more extreme fire behavior while non-typical weather patterns have set the stage to make severe wildfires more frequent.

A [new study](#), published in the esteemed Nature journal, notes that, without climate action, forests are at risk of burning an extra 30 days a year which will have a profound impact on communities, air quality, public health and the economy (through the loss of valuable timber, business closures and the effect of smoke and travel disruption on tourism).

- By utilizing Canada's quickly deployable national fleet of helicopters, federal and provincial governments can be pro-active in their public safety roles to prevent loss of life and reduce health and community impacts from wildfires.
- In B.C. alone, with more than \$357 million spent fighting wildfires this year to date, the 2023 season is officially the costliest on record. To equip Canada's 100 suitable military helicopters with Bambi Buckets, the cost would be about \$15 million and those helicopters would be able to deploy, if requested, to any province experiencing an extreme wildfire season.

Benefits of using military helicopters during extreme wildfire seasons

Equipping Canada's military helicopter fleet to fight wildfires accomplishes the following:

- Enhances public safety through better fire control and quicker wildfire containment
- Reduces air quality issues that impact human health by reducing the amount of smoke from burning fires, also reduces associated healthcare costs for respiratory issues
- Improves mental health in communities experiencing wildfire anxiety and trauma by supplying additional firefighting resources and aid in making daily progress on large fires
- Reduces economic losses to communities and provinces by reducing wildfire impacts and devastation, reduces income disruption and displacement of workers
- Improves public confidence and compliance with evacuation orders when resources are sufficient to meet the demands of an extreme fire season

List of countries using military helicopters, equipped with Bambi Buckets, to fight wildfires

United States	Venezuela	Ecuador
United Kingdom	Egypt	Pakistan
Spain	Israel (Police)	India
Netherlands	South Africa	Mexico
Ireland	Tanzania	Jamaica
Slovenia	UAE	Columbia
Slovakia	Jordan	Peru
Czech Republic	Algeria	Chile
Finland	Lebanon	Brazil
Germany	Indonesia	Argentina
Portugal	Japan	Dominican Republic
Italy	South Korea	Panama
Greece	Taiwan	El Salvador
Montenegro	Singapore	Guatemala
Turkey	Brunei	Honduras
Albania	French Polynesia	Uruguay

Harmful impacts of wildfires (in no particular order)

1. Loss of human life
2. Loss of property
3. Loss of livestock and pets
4. Loss of wildlife and animal habitat
5. Loss of income
 - a. Work interruption
 - b. Business closures
 - c. Relocation of workers
6. Economic losses
 - a. Agriculture
 - b. Tourism
 - c. Local businesses
7. Increase in [healthcare costs](#)
 - a. Decline in physical health (due to air quality)
 - b. Decline in mental health and increase in PTSD within wildfire-affected communities
8. Disproportionate [impact on Indigenous Peoples and lands](#)
9. Shortage of helicopters for search and rescue and other non-wildfire tasks
10. [Movement of species](#) into populated areas

Videos and articles of interest

Video: [US Marines using Bambi Bucket to fight San Diego wildfires](#)

Video: [Colombian Airforce flying its Bambi Bucket](#)

Article: [US National Guard helping to douse wildfires on the west coast](#)

Video: [Daily Planet: Meet the Bambi Bucket](#)

Article: [Guardsmen fight fires from the sky](#) (integration of the military into the wildfire service)