POSITION PAPER 5

Subject: **Ecology Issues**
Date: **October 20, 1989**
Amended: **September 14, 2016**

Purpose Statement: The WFC recognizes that our member agencies offer a variety of fire and rescue services including hazardous materials response. We recognize that the decision to participate and the level of that participation in hazardous materials response is discretionary and is normally based upon each local fire and rescue agencies community risk analysis. The mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery of a hazardous materials risk is a shared responsibility of many governmental agencies including local fire departments, Washington State Patrol, Department of Ecology, Labor and Industries, and Department of Transportation. The WFC member agencies may elect to participate in all four phases but we recognize that response is the current priority and responsibility during the initial response phase. Secondary to response, many member agencies are actively involved in mitigation efforts primarily through enforcement efforts of the International Fire Code. The WFC advocates for cooperative and sustainable programs at the local level that recognize the multi-agency responsibility from an incident through the recovery phase. The nature of large hazardous materials spills and with new risks introduced into our member communities, we must be prepared to respond with an all-hazards approach which is organized on a statewide basis.

Recommendations:

- Build solid working relationships with external agencies to the local fire and rescue agencies that have a responsibility in hazardous materials risk management.
- In cooperation with other stakeholders, develop and maintain a current statewide hazardous materials response plan that focuses on all-hazards.
- In cooperation with other stakeholders, implement and exercise a statewide hazardous materials plan that includes sustainable funding to off-set costs associated with training, response and mutual aid.
- Collaborate on legislation that involves a primary responsibility for local fire and rescue agencies and in some cases where our interests are secondary.
- Ensure that additional responsibilities now owned by other external agencies are not transferred to local fire and rescue agencies without sustainable funding to perform the work.
- Support current WSP State Fire Marshal's Office education and enforcement efforts.