

First Street Foundation Finds Over 30.4 Million Properties Have a 1% or Greater Chance of Experiencing a Wildfire During the Course of a Mortgage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Brooklyn (NY) – (May 16, 2022) - [First Street Foundation](#) today released the First Street Foundation Wildfire Model, the only nationwide, probabilistic, climate adjusted, peer reviewed, property specific wildfire risk model for properties in the contiguous United States. Detailed in [the 5th National Risk Assessment: Fueling the Flames](#), the model provides a first of its kind analysis of the risk individual properties face from damaging wildfires today, and up to 30 years in the future as a result of climate changes.

Nationwide, the report finds nearly 20 million properties face “Moderate” risk, (up to a 6% chance of experiencing a wildfire over 30 years); 6 million properties face “Major” risk (up to 14% risk over 30 years); nearly 3 million face “Severe” risk (up to 26% over 30 years); and approximately 1.5 million face “Extreme” risk (greater than 26% risk over 30 years). Over 49 million properties face less than 1% chance of experiencing a wildfire over a 30-year period, or “Minor” risk in the model.

Wildfire has become one of the most common and dangerous climate perils, increasingly spreading from heavily forested areas to more populous urban and suburban environments. According to NOAA, damage associated with wildfires has grown substantially, with \$81.7 billion, or 66% of all direct losses since 1980, occurring in the last five years. Yet today, neither the public nor private sector have developed a simple methodology or tool to help homeowners, buyers or renters understand a property’s wildfire risk, and make informed decisions to protect them.

Existing tools like USDA Forest Service’s wildfire risk assessment are designed to help fire officials understand how risk varies across a state, region, or county; it is explicitly not meant to help homeowners understand their personal risk. To address this gap, First Street Foundation will make this critical wildfire risk information available to users for free through [Risk Factor™](#), where Fire Factor™ data will be presented alongside Flood Factor® and other future perils, giving users a comprehensive understanding of their homes from physical climate risk today and 30 years into the future. Like Flood Factor, Fire Factor data will be integrated into [Realtor.com®](#), providing visitors to the site a property-level wildfire risk assessment in the form of a risk ranking from 1 (Minimal) to 10 (Extreme) for each property on the site. Users interested in commercial real estate can also find this data integrated with [Crex®](#).

“The lack of a property specific, climate adjusted wildfire risk for individual properties has severely hindered everyone from the federal government to your average American,” said Matthew Eby, Founder and Executive Director of First Street Foundation. “As a changing climate drives more frequent and severe wildfire events, Fire Factor will prove critical in ensuring everyone has the insights they need to understand their personal risk to avoid and protect against the devastating impact of a wildfire.”

“According to a recent Realtor.com® survey, seven out of ten recent homebuyers considered the risk of natural disasters when deciding where to live. Realtor.com® is adding Fire Factor to maps and properties to help home shoppers and homeowners make informed decisions,” said Sara Brinton, Lead Product Manager, Realtor.com®. “Wildfire risk information empowers consumers to protect their homes against the increasing threat of wildfire damage.”

Building the model brought together top climate and data scientists, technologists, and modelers from other leading organizations; the Spatial Informatics Group, Reax Engineering, and Eagle Rock Analytics who are members of the Pyrgreence Consortium as well as the USGS, and architectural design & engineering consulting group Arup. This group combined decades of peer reviewed research and expertise in next-generation modeling techniques to create an

open source, freely available wildfire model that accounts for current and future climate conditions.

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First Street Foundation First Street Foundation is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) research and technology group working to define America's growing climate risk.