

## **CUSTER COUNTY COMMISSION PRESS RELEASE**

### **COUNTY BURN BAN RESCINDED**

**April 29, 2026**

At a special meeting held on April 29, 2026, the Custer County Commission voted to rescind the Countywide Burn Ban following careful review of current conditions and consultation with local and regional fire authorities.

Prior to the meeting, Custer County Emergency Management coordinated with fire departments across the county, as well as State Wildland Fire officials, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Custer County Sheriff's Office. Their collective input, combined with recent weather patterns, informed the Commission's decision. Over the past week, the county has received more than 1.57 inches of moisture. While this rainfall does not resolve ongoing drought conditions, it represents a meaningful improvement. As spring progresses, continued green-up is expected to further reduce the risk of rapid fire spread.

Despite the lifting of the burn ban, all existing South Dakota Wildland Fire regulations remain fully in effect. This includes restrictions governing the Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District and provisions outlined in County Ordinance 20. Residents are reminded that burn permits for slash/burn piles have been invalid for some time—expiring even before the typical March 31 deadline—and will not be reinstated until at least November. While many residents are eager to burn debris, these restrictions are necessary to protect public safety and natural resources.

The Commission emphasizes that it retains the authority to reinstate a countywide burn ban at any time should conditions deteriorate, particularly upon recommendation from fire officials and partner agencies.

Finally, the public is reminded that individuals who start fires are legally responsible for any resulting damages. Residents and visitors are strongly encouraged to educate themselves and strictly adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, and safety precautions before engaging in any activity that could ignite a fire.

The Commission appreciates the community's continued cooperation and commitment to wildfire prevention. Protecting our forests, property, and neighbors is a shared responsibility.