

THE RIPPLING EFFECTS OF WILDFIRES ON THE ECONOMY

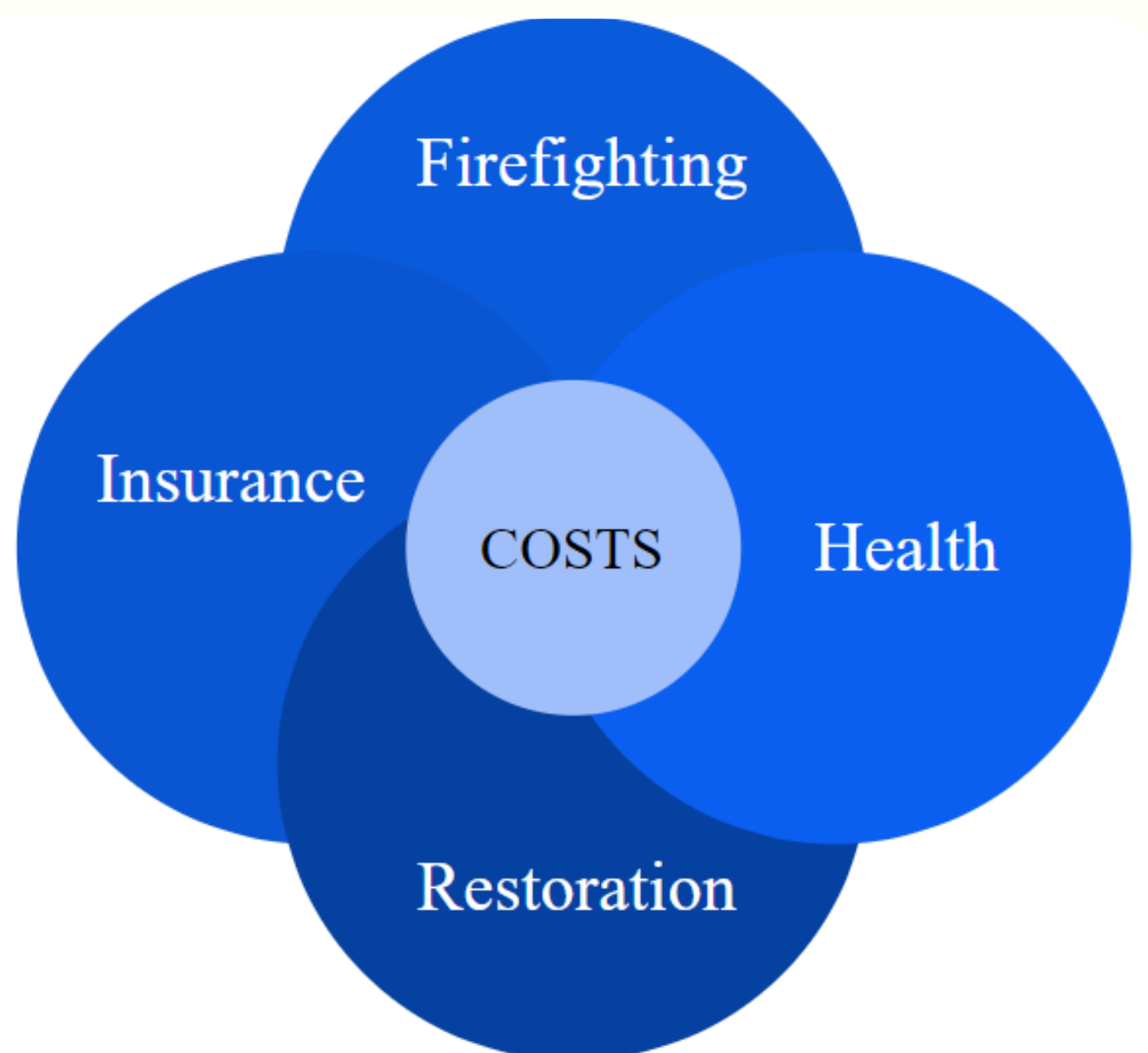
The rise in the number and severity of wildfires results in increased losses, heightened risks, the need for additional firefighting resources, elevated health-care expenses and higher insurance premiums.

Firefighting

Expenses include specialized equipment, transportation, personnel, personal protective gear, wildfire training and related items. Nationally, wildland fire protection costs surpassed [\\$1 billion](#) annually. In Canada, these costs exceeded [\\$1.5 billion](#) in 2023, excluding expenditures for various firefighting, management and climate adaptation programs. In Alberta alone, almost three-quarters of a [\\$1.5-billion](#) contingency fund was allocated to wildfire response in 2023.

Restoration

Expenses cover the restoration of infrastructure, public areas, buildings and forest landscapes. The Government of Canada has announced more than [\\$100 million](#) to restore wildfire-impacted forests and rehabilitate reserve lands damaged by wildfires.



Health care

Since an increasing number of milder and more severe symptoms are connected with wildfires and, as a result of hospitalization, the health-care system will be hit with higher costs, particularly per person.

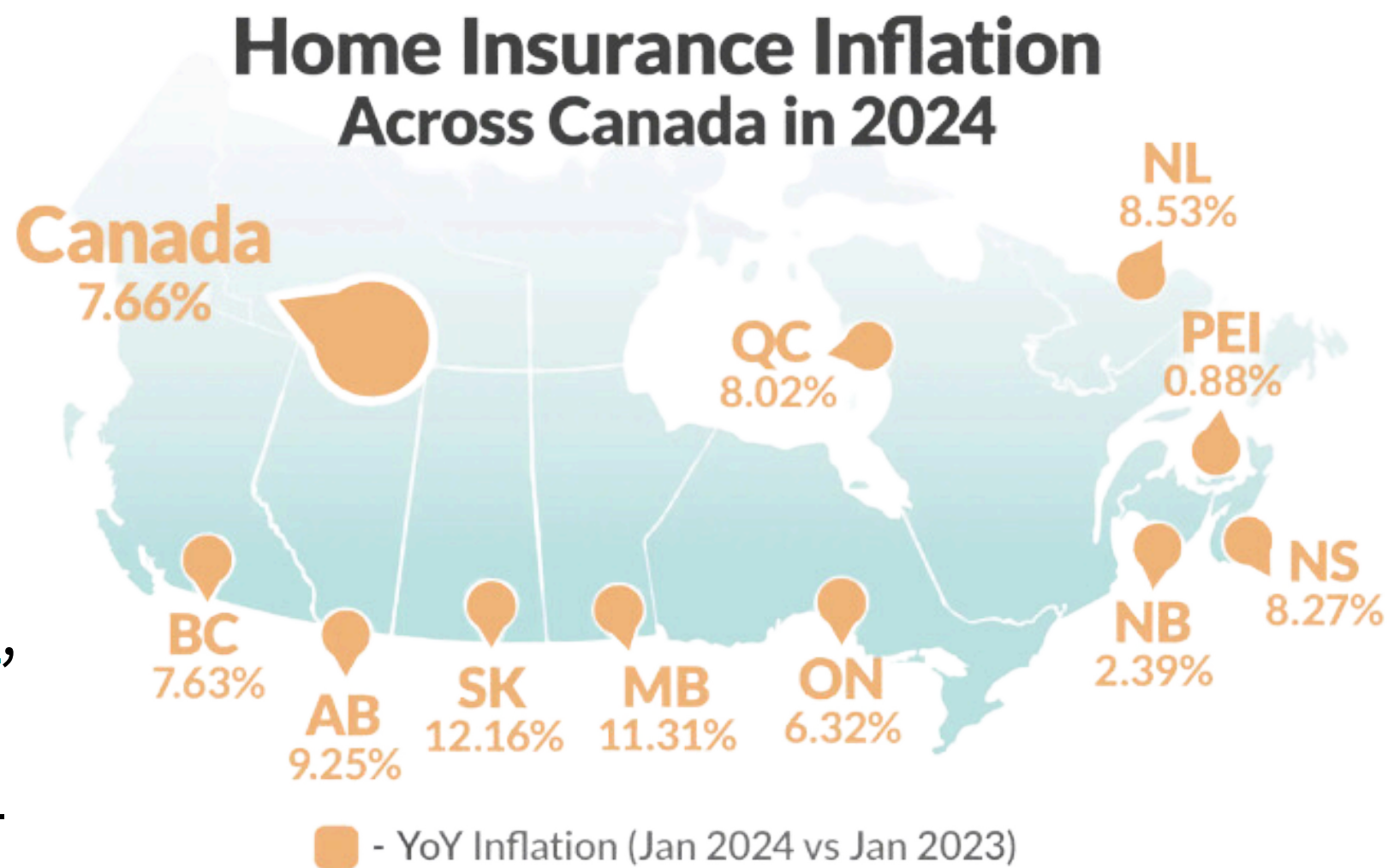
The health-care related spending for wildfires was estimated to be [\\$1.28 billion](#) just for June 4-8, 2023, in Ontario alone.

Insurance

The 2023 wildfire season in Canada incurred insurance costs exceeding **\$945 million**, surpassing expenses from all other extreme weather events that year. These losses foreshadow greater challenges for Canadians in obtaining and affording wildfire insurance in the future, with premiums already rising.

In 2024, Canadian home insurance rates surged by nearly **eight per cent**, reflecting the industry's struggle to cover losses from escalating climate-related disasters, particularly wildfires.

This trend is notable in New Brunswick, where insurance rates rose 2.39 per cent, while replacement costs decreased by 1.11 per cent.



Climate change-induced volatility has rattled the global insurance market, raising concerns about long-term insurance affordability in Canada due to more frequent severe weather events and inflationary pressures.

During major weather events, insurers may impose temporary restrictions on new policy sales in high-risk areas, with some regions facing outright refusal of coverage expansion. This includes areas within evacuation zones or those at heightened risk of wildfires, highlighting the evolving landscape of insurance risk management in response to climate change.



Established in 1969, the Conservation Council of New Brunswick is the province's leading public advocate for environmental protection.

A member of the United Nations' Global 500 Roll of Honour, we work to find practical solutions to help families and citizens, educators, governments and businesses protect the air we breathe, the water we drink, the precious marine ecosystem and the land, including the forests, that support us.



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