

REVISED 09-25-2014 15:19;

INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2013-201

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3       REQUESTING THAT THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, AND LOCAL  
4       AFFAIRS CONDUCT A STUDY OF THE BEST PRACTICES OF FIRE DEPARTMENTS  
5       IN THE STATE AND IN THE NATION THAT MAY BE IMPLEMENTED IN A LOCAL  
6       COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY.

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8       WHEREAS, the Insurance Services Office, Inc. is a private, for-profit  
9       company that provides fire loss risk evaluations based on its Fire  
10       Suppression Rating Schedule to determine the capabilities of a local  
11       community fire department to respond to fires; and

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13       WHEREAS, the Insurance Services Office, Inc. helps insurers calculate  
14       local property insurance rates by grading a local community's fire loss risk  
15       that is used for property insurance rating schedules; and

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17       WHEREAS, a local community's public protection classification grade is  
18       calculated by comparing the actual conditions in a local area with the  
19       standards of the fire suppression rating schedule; and

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21       WHEREAS, recent revisions to the Fire Suppression Rating Schedule used  
22       by the Insurance Services Office, Inc. will impact a local community's public  
23       protection classification grade and property insurance rating schedules; and

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25       WHEREAS, national and state research should be analyzed to study  
26       possible improvements to the public protection classification system used by  
27       the state to evaluate the fire loss risk of local communities and its impact  
28       on property insurance rates; and

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30       WHEREAS, because of the rural nature of local communities that are  
31       served by many fire departments in the state, the responsibilities of a fire  
32       department include more than just fire protection, including without  
33       limitation providing assistance for medical calls, rescues, and other  
34       emergency services; and

1           WHEREAS, a large number of fire departments are staffed by an aging  
2 population of volunteers and fire departments are currently having a  
3 difficult time obtaining new volunteers and keeping experienced volunteers;  
4 and

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6           WHEREAS, there are one thousand three (1003) fire departments in the  
7 state and many of these fire departments overlap service areas of other  
8 jurisdictions or cover areas that are too large to provide adequate fire  
9 protection; and

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11           WHEREAS, there are a number of different types of fire departments in  
12 the state, resulting in a lack of uniformity in business structure and  
13 operation that is confusing for property owners, insurance companies, and  
14 fire departments themselves; and the departments that are organized as fire  
15 protection districts seem to be the most efficient and effective way to  
16 organize a fire department,

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18 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, AND LOCAL AFFAIRS OF  
19 THE EIGHTY-NINTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:

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21           THAT the House Committee On City, County, And Local Affairs conduct an  
22 interim study to determine the best practices of fire departments in the  
23 state and in the nation that may be implemented in a local community to  
24 improve efficiency.

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26           BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and provide a proposal for  
27 the implementation of an in-state property insurance rating system that does  
28 not utilize or participate in the Insurance Services Office, Inc.'s Fire  
29 Suppression Rating Schedule and public protection classification system.

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31           BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and analyze the impact of  
32 an increase in funding to volunteer fire departments.

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34           BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review the role of fire  
35 departments including without limitation response to fires, medical  
36 assistance calls, rescues, and other emergency services.

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BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and analyze potential incentives and methods to recruit and retain volunteers for volunteer fire departments.

BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review the number of volunteer fire departments and any available resources in the state to determine the most efficient operation of volunteer fire departments and evaluate if consolidation of fire departments or other options or measures are necessary to improve efficiency.

BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and study the conversion of all non-municipal fire departments to fire protection districts.

BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and develop an overall comprehensive plan to bring all the non-municipal fire department's Insurance Services Office, Inc.'s public protection class rating to a six (6) or less by 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Representative Kim Hammer  
District 28

By: ANS/ANS