

1 INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2019-129

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3 REQUESTING THE ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE SENATE  
4 COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, AND LOCAL AFFAIRS CONDUCT AN INTERIM  
5 STUDY TO DETERMINE THE BEST PRACTICES OF FIRE DEPARTMENTS IN THE  
6 STATE AND IN THE NATION THAT MAY BE IMPLEMENTED IN A LOCAL  
7 COMMUNITY TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY.  
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9 WHEREAS, because of the rural nature of local communities that are  
10 served by many fire departments in the state, the responsibilities of a fire  
11 department include more than just fire protection, including without  
12 limitation providing assistance for medical calls, rescues, and other  
13 emergency services; and  
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15 WHEREAS, a large number of fire departments are staffed by an aging  
16 population of volunteers and fire departments are currently having a  
17 difficult time obtaining new volunteers and keeping experienced volunteers;  
18 and  
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20 WHEREAS, there are over nine hundred (900) fire departments in the  
21 state and many of these fire departments overlap service areas of other  
22 jurisdictions or cover areas that are too large to provide adequate fire  
23 protection; and  
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25 WHEREAS, there is no central means of communication to and for these  
26 fire departments and no statewide coordinator; and  
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28 WHEREAS, data collection across the state is needed to gather  
29 information on equipment supply and demand, funding issues, and other related  
30 areas; and  
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32 WHEREAS, national and state research should be analyzed to study  
33 possible improvements to the public protection classification system used by  
34 the state to evaluate the fire loss risk of local communities and its impact  
35 on property insurance rates; and  
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1           WHEREAS, there are a number of fire departments that operate within  
2 municipalities for municipalities with no organized municipal fire  
3 department; and the procedures and challenges for these departments need to  
4 be examined; and  
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6           WHEREAS, there is consistent misuse of fire department funds, creating  
7 a need for a uniform audit mechanism to be put in place; and  
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9           WHEREAS, there are a number of different types of fire departments in  
10 the state, resulting in a lack of uniformity in business structure and  
11 operation that is confusing for property owners, insurance companies, and  
12 fire departments themselves; and in light of recent legislation affecting  
13 fire protection districts, the differences in departments need to be examined  
14 and compared to determine advantages and disadvantages of the types of fire  
15 department organization,  
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17 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON CITY, COUNTY, AND LOCAL AFFAIRS OF  
18 THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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20           THAT the Senate Committee On City, County, And Local Affairs conduct an  
21 interim study to determine the best practices of fire departments in the  
22 state and in the nation that may be implemented in a local community to  
23 improve efficiency.  
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25           BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and analyze the impact of  
26 an increase in funding to volunteer fire departments.  
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28           BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review the role of fire  
29 departments including without limitation response to fires, medical  
30 assistance calls, rescues, and other emergency services.  
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32           BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review and analyze potential  
33 incentives and methods to recruit and retain volunteers for volunteer fire  
34 departments.  
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1           BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review the number of volunteer  
2 fire departments and any available resources in the state to determine the  
3 most efficient organization and operation of volunteer fire departments and  
4 evaluate if consolidation of fire departments or other options or measures  
5 are necessary to improve efficiency.  
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7           BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED THAT the study review any and all other  
8 pertinent information related to this endeavor.  
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10 Respectfully submitted,  
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14 Senator Kim Hammer  
15 District 33

16 Prepared by: KLC/KLC  
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