

INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2013-201

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

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

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

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

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

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

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