

1 State of Arkansas  
2 90th General Assembly  
3 Regular Session, 2015  
4

*As Engrossed: H3/12/15*

# A Bill

HOUSE BILL 1659

5 By: Representatives Hammer, Ratliff  
6

## For An Act To Be Entitled

8 AN ACT TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING THE RURAL FIRE  
9 DEPARTMENTS STUDY COMMITTEE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

### Subtitle

10 TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING THE RURAL  
11 FIRE DEPARTMENTS STUDY COMMITTEE.  
12

13 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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15

16 SECTION 1. Arkansas Code § 14-272-101(b)(1), concerning the creation  
17 of the Rural Fire Departments Study Committee, is amended to read as follows:  
18

19 (b)(1) The following shall be nonvoting ex officio members of the  
20 ~~committee~~ Rural Fire Departments Study Committee:  
21

22 (A) One (1) member representing the Arkansas Farm Bureau  
23 Federation, to be recommended by the Arkansas Farm Bureau Federation and  
24 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;  
25

26 (B) One (1) member representing the Independent Insurance  
27 Agents of Arkansas, to be recommended by the Independent Insurance Agents of  
28 Arkansas and appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;  
29

30 (C) One (1) member representing the Arkansas County Judges  
31 Association, to be recommended by the Arkansas County Judges Association and  
32 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;  
33

34 (D) One (1) member representing the Arkansas Rural and  
35 Volunteer Fire Fighters Association, to be recommended by the Arkansas Rural  
36 and Volunteer Fire Fighters Association and appointed by the Speaker of the  
House of Representatives;

(E) One (1) member representing the Arkansas Council of



1 Professional Fire Fighters, to be recommended by the Arkansas Council of  
2 Professional Fire Fighters and appointed by the Speaker of the House of  
3 Representatives;

4 (F) One (1) member representing the Arkansas Municipal  
5 League, to be recommended by the Arkansas Municipal League and appointed by  
6 the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

7 (G) One (1) member appointed by the Speaker of the House  
8 of Representatives ~~to represent~~ be recommended by the Arkansas State  
9 Firefighters Association;

10 (H) The Director of the Arkansas Forestry Commission or ~~the~~  
11 ~~director's~~ his or her designee;

12 (I) The Director of the Department of Rural Services or  
13 ~~the director's~~ his or her designee; ~~and~~

14 (J) The Manager of the Rural Fire Protection Program of  
15 the Arkansas Association of Resource Conservation and Development Councils;

16 (K) The State Fire Marshal or his or her designee;

17 (L) The Insurance Commissioner or his or her designee;

18 (M) The State Fire Service Coordinator of the Arkansas  
19 Department of Emergency Management or his or her designee;

20 (N) The President of the Arkansas Forestry Association or  
21 his or her designee;

22 (O) The State Geographic Information Officer or his or her  
23 designee;

24 (P) Two (2) firefighters representing volunteer fire  
25 departments, to be recommended by the cochair of the Rural Fire Departments  
26 Study Committee and appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

27 (Q) Two (2) fire chiefs representing volunteer fire  
28 departments, to be recommended by the Arkansas Association of Fire Chiefs and  
29 appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

30 (R) One (1) member representing nonprofit fire  
31 departments, to be recommended by the cochair of the Rural Fire Departments  
32 Study Committee and appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;  
33 and

34 (S) Two (2) fire department consultants, to be recommended  
35 by the cochair of the Rural Fire Departments Study Committee and appointed  
36 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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2 SECTION 2. Arkansas Code § 14-272-103, concerning studies and findings  
3 of the Rural Fire Departments Study Committee, is amended to add an  
4 additional subsection to read as follows:

5 (c) The committee shall:

6 (1) Study, review, and analyze potential incentives and methods  
7 to recruit and retain volunteers for nonmunicipal fire departments;

8 (2) Study and review the number of nonmunicipal fire departments  
9 and any available resources in the state to determine the most efficient  
10 operation of nonmunicipal fire departments and evaluate if consolidation of  
11 fire departments or other measures are necessary to improve efficiency;

12 (3) Study and review all types of nonmunicipal fire departments,  
13 including without limitation countywide fire departments, and the potential  
14 conversion of the departments to fire protection districts;

15 (4) Study and develop a comprehensive plan to bring all  
16 nonmunicipal fire departments' Insurance Services Office, Inc.'s Public  
17 Protection Classification rating to Class 6 or less by January 1, 2024,  
18 including without limitation a review of:

19 (A) Numbers of volunteers for each nonmunicipal fire  
20 department;

21 (B) Number of nonmunicipal fire department locations;

22 (C) Equipment at each nonmunicipal fire department  
23 location; and

24 (D) Essential equipment necessary at each nonmunicipal  
25 fire department location;

26 (5) Study and review the financial solvency of nonmunicipal fire  
27 departments and analyze the impact of an increase in funding to the  
28 nonmunicipal fire departments;

29 (6) Study and review the role of nonmunicipal fire departments,  
30 including without limitation response to fires, nonstructural fires, medical  
31 assistance calls, rescues, and other emergency services; and

32 (7) Study and review other nonmunicipal fire department matters  
33 as deemed necessary by the committee.

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35 */s/Hammer*