

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2019 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

Senate Bill 1013 (Senators Serafini and Gallion)
Judicial Proceedings

Public Safety - Task Force on Volunteer Fire Companies and Rescue Squads

This bill establishes a Task Force on Volunteer Fire Companies and Rescue Squads. The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) must provide staff for the task force. The task force must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly by December 31, 2019. **The bill takes effect June 1, 2019, and terminates May 31, 2020.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: Any expense reimbursements for task force members and staffing costs for DPSCS are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: The task force must:

- examine staffing levels of volunteer fire companies and rescue squads in the State;
- review current volunteer fire company and rescue squad recruitment practices across the State;
- evaluate the costs and impact of training requirements and technology requirements on staffing and recruitment levels;

- examine the different challenges and needs of rural, suburban, and urban volunteer fire companies and rescue squads; and
- study the efforts of other states to address and combat volunteer fire company and rescue squad staffing shortages.

A member of the task force may not receive compensation but is entitled to reimbursement for expenses under the standard State travel regulations, as provided in the State budget.

Current Law: Several State entities are involved in fire and rescue-related services:

- The Office of the State Fire Marshal within the Department of State Police is responsible for statewide fire, arson, and explosive investigations, enforcement of the State Fire Prevention Code, coordination of fire prevention efforts, and the collection of fire incident data.
- The Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI) of the University of Maryland is responsible for providing classroom education and training for career and volunteer fire and rescue personnel. Among other things, MFRI cooperates with the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS) to train rescue personnel and emergency medical technicians.
- MIEMSS oversees and coordinates all components of the statewide Emergency Medical Services System.
- The Maryland Emergency Management Agency administers the Senator William H. Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund, which provides grants to local jurisdictions for the purchase of fire and rescue equipment and building rehabilitation.

Background: The Maryland State Firefighters Association advises that there are 362 volunteer fire companies and approximately 28,000 volunteer firefighters in the State.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services; Department of State Police; Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute; Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems; Maryland State Firefighters Association; Department of Legislative Services

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