

Stricken language would be deleted from and underlined language would be added to present law.

State of Arkansas *As Engrossed:* H3/12/15 H3/13/15 H3/17/15 H3/20/15 H3/23/15

90th General Assembly

# A Bill

Regular Session, 2015

HOUSE BILL 1659

By: Representatives Hammer, Ratliff

By: Senators A. Clark, Irvin

## For An Act To Be Entitled

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

### Subtitle

TO AMEND THE LAW CONCERNING THE RURAL  
FIRE DEPARTMENTS STUDY COMMITTEE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



(E) One (1) member representing the Arkansas Council of Professional Fire Fighters, to be recommended by the Arkansas Council of Professional Fire Fighters and appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives;

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(S) A fire department consultant, to be recommended by the cochairs of the Rural Fire Departments Study Committee and appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

(T) One (1) member representing the Insurance Services Office, Inc., to be recommended by the cochairs of the Rural Fire Departments Study Committee and appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

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

(c) The committee shall:

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

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

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

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

(A) Numbers of volunteers for each fire department;

(B) Number of fire department locations;

(C) Equipment at each fire department location; and

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

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

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

(7) Study and review the role of fire department consultants and establish guidelines and qualifications for fire department consulting services; and

(8) Study and review other fire department matters as deemed necessary by the committee.

*/s/Hammer*