



House of Representatives

General Assembly

File No. 569

February Session, 2000

Substitute House Bill No. 5841

House of Representatives, April 12, 2000

The Committee on Appropriations reported through REP. DYSON of the 94th Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the House, that the substitute bill ought to pass.

An Act Concerning Thermal Imaging Cameras.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 (NEW) The Commissioner of Public Safety shall establish a program
2 of grants to municipalities to assist such municipalities in the purchase
3 of thermal imaging cameras. The commissioner may apply for any
4 federal or other funds which may be available to assist in the
5 implementation of this program. The commissioner shall adopt
6 regulations in accordance with chapter 54 of the general statutes which
7 shall include, but not be limited to, the specifications of the thermal
8 imaging cameras which may be purchased with the aid of grants
9 under this program, the amount, if any, of matching funds required
10 from municipalities, the factors the commissioner will consider in
11 awarding grants, and the weight to be attached to each such factor.

PS Committee Vote: Yea 22 Nay 0 JF C/R APP

APP Committee Vote: Yea 50 Nay 0 JFS

The following fiscal impact statement and bill analysis are prepared for the benefit of members of the General Assembly, solely for the purpose of information, summarization, and explanation, and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either House thereof for any purpose:

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact: Minimal Cost

Affected Agencies: Department of Public Safety

Municipal Impact: Potential Revenue Gain

Explanation

State and Municipal Impact:

The passage of this bill would result in minimal additional costs to the state Department of Public Safety (DPS) and could also result in a revenue gain to municipalities. The bill requires the Commissioner of DPS to establish a program of grants to municipalities to assist in the purchase of thermal imaging cameras. DPS would develop the program utilizing existing staff and within existing resources. It authorizes the commissioner to apply for any federal or other funds, which may be available to assist in the development of the program. There are no federal or state funding sources for grants at this time.

Thermal imaging cameras are significant new tools used by police firefighters for locating persons in darkness or through smoke. The cost of these cameras ranges from about \$17,000 to \$25,000. A mass purchase of a large number could result in a lower price. A survey of fire departments indicates that less than 10% of the state's 300 fire departments currently own a thermal imaging camera, but most are in the process of raising moneys to purchase them. It is not known how many of Connecticut's 99 local police departments have this

technology.

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 5841

AN ACT CONCERNING THERMAL IMAGING CAMERAS.

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the public safety commissioner to establish a grant program to help municipalities buy thermal imaging cameras, allows him to apply for any funds available to help implement the program, and requires him to adopt implementing regulations. The regulations must include camera specifications, the amount of any matching municipal funds, grant award criteria, and the weight attached to each criterion.

Thermal imaging cameras use infrared sensor technology to make pictures, allowing users to see through smoke or darkness to identify people or objects giving off heat.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2000

BACKGROUND

Related Bill

SB 224 (File 256), which the Planning and Development Committee favorably reported, allows municipalities to use local capital improvement grants to improve telecommunications or information technology systems and to purchase thermal imaging equipment.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety Committee

Joint Favorable Change of Reference
Yea 22 Nay 0

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 50 Nay 0