



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OFFICE OF STATE FIRE ADMINISTRATION



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TESTIMONY OF JEFFREY J. MORRISSETTE, STATE FIRE ADMINISTRATOR

PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING MARCH 4, 2010

Good morning Senator Stillman, Representative Dargan and honorable members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you.

My name is Jeffrey Morrisette, I serve as the State Fire Administrator and Agency Head for the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control.

I am here to speak in support of **Raised Bill 195 - An Act Concerning the Designation of Regional Fire Schools.**

The responsibility to disburse state funds to the independent Regional Fire Schools was transferred from the Comptrollers Miscellaneous Accounts to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control in Fiscal Year 2007. When the change occurred, statutory language within CGS Sec. 3-123e was not revised to reflect current practice. Therefore, the revisions proposed within Sections 1 – 5 of the Act clearly account for the change in current practice and address some long needed housekeeping of language.

In General, this proposal will allow any future designation of Regional Fire Schools to undergo a comprehensive evaluation by the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and the Connecticut State Firefighter's Association (CSFA) Education Committee which is comprised of representatives from each of the current nine Regional Fire Schools to ensure compliance with a statewide master plan for fire service training and education.

New language proposed in Section 6 and 7 has been reviewed by both the Commission and CSFA Education Committee with general consensus and agreement. A concern expressed to the Commission is consideration be given that a moratorium be placed on the designation of any future Regional Fire Schools until the \$60+ million capital improvement plan to upgrade the current facilities has been achieved. The only exception to this is the CSFA Education Committee did agree in FY09 to recognize the City of Danbury Fire Department as a Regional School. Legislation was proposed during the 2009 Legislative Session to codify Danbury as a Regional School, however the Bill did not pass. It is my understanding efforts are still in play to include Danbury during the current Session. We support this effort. Further, it has been recommended that any current Regional Fire School be grandfathered, exempt from future revocation of status. Also, regulations adopted to implement the provisions of this section should include an appeals process, specifically as it relates to revocation of Regional Fire School status. We have agreed to address the issues raised during the future development of regulations.

Lastly, both the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and Connecticut State Firefighter's Association fully understand that funding for the Regional Fire School System rests with the Governor and General Assembly. My initial proposed language to the Committee reflected this fact (attached).

Therefore, I urge your favorable disposition of this Bill with the recommended substitute language.

I am available to respond to any questions you may have.

Regional Fire School Designation Authority
CFPC10-01

3-123e. Disbursement of funds appropriated for [regional fire schools,] regional emergency dispatch centers [or] and state or county-wide fire radio base networks. Annual report. The Comptroller shall disburse to any [regional fire school,] regional emergency dispatch center or any state or county-wide fire radio base network, in the form of a grant, such funds as may be appropriated to the Comptroller for the purposes of such [fire school,] emergency dispatch center or fire radio base network. Each such grant shall be disbursed in equal quarterly amounts at the beginning of each quarter of the state fiscal year. After the close of each fiscal year, each [such fire school,] emergency dispatch center or fire radio base network shall submit to the Comptroller, through the Connecticut State Firemen's Association, an audited report concerning the disbursement of such grant funds.

7-323l. Duties of Commission on Fire Prevention and Control. Regulations. (a) The Commission shall:

(1) Recommend minimum standards of education and physical condition required of each candidate for any firefighter position;

(2) Establish standards for a fire service training and education program, on a voluntary basis, and develop and conduct an examination program to certify those fire service personnel who satisfactorily demonstrate their ability to meet the requirements of the fire service training and education program standards;

(3) Conduct fire fighting training and education programs designed to assist firefighters in developing and maintaining their skills and keeping abreast of technological advances in fire suppression, fire protection, fire prevention and related fields;

(4) Recommend standards for promotion to the various ranks of fire departments;

(5) Be authorized to apply for, receive and distribute any federal or private funds or contributions available for training and education of fire fighting personnel; and

(6) Submit to the Governor and Joint Legislative Management Committee of the General Assembly an annual report relating to the activities, recommendations and accomplishments of the commission.

(7) Consult with the Connecticut State Firefighters Association in the designation of Regional Fire Schools. Recommend to the Governor for the designation of, or revoke the approval of, any Regional Fire Training School and issue certification to such schools and to revoke such certification. Disburse to any designated Regional Fire Training School, in the form of a grant, such funds as may be appropriated to the Commission for the purposes of such fire school. After the close of each fiscal year, each Regional Fire School shall submit to the Commission, through the Connecticut State Firefighters Association, an audited report concerning the disbursement of such grant funds.

(b) The commission may adopt regulations, in accordance with the provisions of chapter 54, as are necessary to implement the provisions of this section.