

# Public Safety and Security Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** SB-338  
**Title:** AN ACT EXPANDING THE ELIGIBILITY FOR GRANTS TO REMOVE PFAS FROM FIRE APPARATUS.  
**Vote Date:** 3/12/2024  
**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable  
**PH Date:** 3/7/2024  
**File No.:**

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### SPONSORS OF BILL:

**Rep. Eleni Kavros DeGraw, 17th Dist.**  
**Rep. Tammy R. Exum, 19th Dist.**  
**Rep. Greg S. Howard, 43rd Dist.**

### REASONS FOR BILL:

Last year (2023) H.B.No.5250 was passed to provide reimbursement to fire departments that aided in the removal of harmful PFAS materials within breathing apparatuses and firefighting foam up until July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. These PFAS materials are used nearly every day by firefighters and were not only harmful to the health and safety of our fire personnel but also to the surrounding environments they were used on.

This bill would extend that reimbursement program by allowing the eligibility for grants for the removal of PFAS from firefighting apparatuses to independent fire companies and state agencies which currently is only available to municipalities. With this legislation Connecticut would ensure the firefighters would be incentivized to dispose of these harmful chemicals aiding in the safety and security of our communities and those who seek to protect them.

### RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

#### **Kevin Dillon, Executive Director, CT Airport Authority, Opposes:**

Explains how this effort would be costly. While some of these costs may be eligible for federal funding, as of this time, a significant portion of these costs will fall on the CAA. Suggests an amendment to include the allowance of “quasi-public agencies” or “all political subdivisions of the state” to be eligible for funding under this grant program.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

### **Betsy Gara, Executive Director, CT Council of Small Towns, Supports:**

SB-338 will take another positive step forward in helping to protect the health and safety of our firefighters as well as by eliminating a source of PFAS which may contaminate soil and water sources.

### **Mike Muszynski, CCM, Supports:**

Providing municipalities and fire companies financial support to remove PFAS related substances is another step that can be taken to protect the health and safety of our firefighters, local residents and limit future environmental contamination. Importantly, to ensure continued success of this grant, CCM would recommend that the state fully fund and financially commit to this program.

### **Brandon Robertson, Town Manager, Town of Avon, Supports:**

Expresses how this bill is a value statement. By passing this legislation the State of Connecticut is showing they value the health and wellness of their fire fighters and natural surroundings. This bill would provide those who have been swift to action regarding the concerns of PFAS related substances a reimbursement for their efforts.

### **Kevin McKie, Environmental Litigation Group, Supports:**

The process to remove harmful PFAS materials will take several years, but this is the first step towards a PFAS free future in which firefighters will no longer be exposed to harmful chemicals and the negative effects on our environment will be negated. Several states around the country are also taking action against these materials. Connecticut should join the cause as well.

### **Earl Provencher, Fire Chief, North Thompsonville Fire Dept, Supports:**

Expresses how many departments last year did their part in the disposing of the harmful PFAS chemicals within their apparatus but did so short of the deadline presented in previous legislation. With this extension those that "did the right thing" would be adequately reimbursed for their efforts and those who have not taken part will be incentivized to do so.

### **Joe Speich, Assistant Fire Chief, Avon VFD, Supports:**

Sites the dedication and diligence of many fire departments after the passing of last years legislation to dispose of PFAS materials prior to July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023. With this new extension those who were early adopters and quick to act would be rightfully reimbursed.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

### **None Expressed.**

**Reported by: Casey Urso (Assistant Clerk)**

**Date: March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024**