



# House of Representatives

**File No. 653**

General Assembly

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February Session, 2024 **(Reprint of File No. 291)**

Substitute House Bill No. 5483  
As Amended by House Amendment  
Schedule "A"

Approved by the Legislative Commissioner  
May 2, 2024

**AN ACT ESTABLISHING AND TRANSFERRING VARIOUS  
FUNCTIONS TO A DIVISION OF FIRE SERVICES ADMINISTRATION  
WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND  
PUBLIC PROTECTION, REVISING THE POWERS AND COMPOSITION  
OF THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL AND  
ESTABLISHING A WORKING GROUP.**

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

1 Section 1. Section 29-1b of the general statutes is repealed and the  
2 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

3 (a) There shall be within the Department of Emergency Services and  
4 Public Protection a Division of State Police. The Commissioner of  
5 Emergency Services and Public Protection shall serve as administrative  
6 head and commanding officer of the State Police Division. As  
7 administrative head, said commanding officer of the Division of State  
8 Police shall delegate said commanding officer's jurisdiction of the affairs  
9 of the Division of State Police to a deputy commissioner who shall have  
10 the powers and privileges conferred by statute upon a state policeman.

11 (b) There shall be within said department a Division of Emergency  
12 Management and Homeland Security. The commissioner shall serve as  
13 administrative head of said division. As administrative head, said  
14 commissioner shall delegate said commissioner's jurisdiction of the  
15 Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security to a  
16 deputy commissioner. The deputy commissioner shall possess  
17 professional training and knowledge consisting of not less than five  
18 years of managerial or strategic planning experience in matters relating  
19 to public safety, security, emergency services and emergency response.  
20 No person possessing a record of any criminal, unlawful or unethical  
21 conduct shall be eligible for or hold such position. Any person with any  
22 present or past political activities or financial interests that may  
23 substantially conflict with the duties of the deputy commissioner or  
24 expose such person to potential undue influence or compromise such  
25 person's ability to be entrusted with necessary state or federal security  
26 clearances or information shall be deemed unqualified for such position  
27 and shall not be eligible to hold such position.

28 (c) (1) There shall be within said department a Division of Fire  
29 Services Administration. The State Fire Administrator shall be the  
30 administrative head of said division.

31 (2) The functions, powers, duties and personnel of the former Office  
32 of State Fire Administration shall be transferred to the Division of Fire  
33 Services Administration pursuant to the provisions of sections 4-38d  
34 and 4-39.

35 (3) The Division of Fire Services Administration shall constitute the  
36 successor to the Office of State Fire Administration in accordance with  
37 the provisions of sections 4-38d, 4-38e and 4-39. Wherever the words  
38 "Office of State Fire Administration" are used in the general statutes, the  
39 words "Division of Fire Services Administration within the Department  
40 of Emergency Services and Public Protection" shall be substituted in lieu  
41 thereof. Any order or regulation of the former Office of State Fire  
42 Administration that is in force on the effective date of this section shall  
43 continue in force and effect as an order or regulation of the Division of

44 Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency  
45 Services and Public Protection until amended, repealed or superseded  
46 pursuant to law.

47 Sec. 2. Section 7-323k of the general statutes is repealed and the  
48 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective from passage*):

49 (a) (1) There is established a Commission on Fire Prevention and  
50 Control. [to] Until June 30, 2025, the commission shall consist of twelve  
51 members appointed by the Governor. The State Fire Marshal or his or  
52 her designee and the president of the Connecticut State Colleges and  
53 Universities or his or her designee shall serve as ex-officio, voting  
54 members of said commission. Of the twelve members appointed by the  
55 Governor, two shall represent The Connecticut State Firefighter's  
56 Association, two shall represent the Connecticut Fire Chiefs  
57 Association, two shall represent the Uniformed Professional Firefighters  
58 of the International Association of Firefighters, AFL-CIO, two shall  
59 represent the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association, two shall  
60 represent the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors Association and  
61 two shall represent the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities. The  
62 term of any member appointed pursuant to this subdivision shall end  
63 on June 30, 2025.

64 (2) On and after July 1, 2025, the commission shall consist of the  
65 following members:

66 (A) Two members of The Connecticut State Firefighter's Association,  
67 one of whom is the chairperson of the association's education  
68 committee, appointed by the Governor;

69 (B) Two members of the Connecticut Fire Chiefs Association,  
70 appointed by the Governor;

71 (C) Two members of the Connecticut Career Fire Chiefs' Association,  
72 appointed by the Governor;

73 (D) Two members of the Uniformed Professional Firefighters of the

74 International Association of Firefighters, AFL-CIO, appointed by the  
75 Governor;

76 (E) Two members of the Connecticut Fire Marshals Association,  
77 appointed by the Governor;

78 (F) Two members of the Connecticut Fire Department Instructors  
79 Association, appointed by the Governor;

80 (G) A representative of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns,  
81 appointed by the Governor;

82 (H) A representative of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities,  
83 appointed by the Governor;

84 (I) A representative of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns,  
85 appointed by the House chairperson of the joint standing committee of  
86 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public  
87 safety and security;

88 (J) A representative of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities,  
89 appointed by the Senate chairperson of the joint standing committee of  
90 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public  
91 safety and security;

92 (K) A member of the Connecticut Fire Equipment Mechanics  
93 Association, appointed by the House ranking member of the joint  
94 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
95 matters relating to public safety and security;

96 (L) A representative of the Emergency Medical Services Advisory  
97 Board, appointed by the Senate ranking member of the joint standing  
98 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
99 relating to public safety and security;

100 (M) The State Fire Marshal, who shall be a nonvoting member;

101 (N) The forest protection supervisor within the Forestry Division of

102 the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, or such  
103 supervisor's designee, who shall be a nonvoting member; and

104 (O) The commanding officer of the Fire and Explosion Investigation  
105 Unit of the Division of State Police within the Department of Emergency  
106 Services and Public Protection, or such officer's designee, who shall be  
107 a nonvoting member.

108 (b) On or before July fifteenth, annually, each organization to be  
109 represented on said commission shall submit to the [Governor]  
110 appropriate appointing authority a list of nominees for appointment to  
111 said commission, which list the [Governor] appointing authority may  
112 use when making appointments to said commission. [On or before  
113 September 1, 1975, the Governor shall appoint eight members of said  
114 commission to serve for a term of three years and on or before  
115 September 1, 1976, he shall appoint four members for a term of one year.  
116 Thereafter he] Appointing authorities shall appoint members to said  
117 commission [, to replace those whose terms have expired,] to serve for  
118 three years, or until a successor is appointed. Any vacancy in the  
119 membership of the commission shall be filled by the appointing  
120 authority for the unexpired portion of the term. Persons appointed to  
121 said commission shall be qualified, by experience or education, in the  
122 fields of fire protection, fire prevention, fire suppression, fire fighting  
123 and related fields.

124 (c) The commission shall meet at such times and at such places as it  
125 deems proper. [Said] On and before June 30, 2025, the commission shall  
126 elect from its membership a [chairman, vice chairman] chairperson, vice  
127 chairperson and secretary who shall serve a one year term commencing  
128 on October first of the year in which they are elected, provided such  
129 terms shall expire on June 30, 2025, and nothing contained herein shall  
130 prevent their reelection to such office. On and after July 1, 2025, the  
131 Governor shall appoint the chairperson of the commission from the  
132 commission's membership, and the commission shall elect from its  
133 membership a vice chairperson and secretary, who shall serve one year  
134 terms, provided nothing contained herein shall prevent their reelection

135 to such office. No member of said commission shall receive  
136 compensation for such member's services.

137 (d) Members of the commission shall not be considered as holding  
138 public office solely by virtue of their membership on said commission.

139 (e) On and after July 1, 2025, the members of the education committee  
140 of the Connecticut State Firefighters Association, Inc., shall serve as a  
141 subcommittee of the commission on matters relating to fire schools.

142 [(e)] (f) The commission shall be within the Department of Emergency  
143 Services and Public Protection.

144 Sec. 3. Section 7-323l of the general statutes is repealed and the  
145 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

146 (a) The commission shall:

147 (1) Recommend minimum standards of education and physical  
148 condition [required of each candidate] for candidates for any firefighter  
149 position;

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

155 (3) Establish an optional fire service training and education program  
156 in the handling of incidents, such as wandering, that involve juveniles  
157 and adults with autism spectrum disorder, cognitive impairment or  
158 nonverbal learning disorder, provided the curriculum for such  
159 techniques is made available at no cost from (A) institutions of higher  
160 education, health care professionals or advocacy organizations that are  
161 concerned with juveniles and adults with autism spectrum disorder,  
162 cognitive impairment or nonverbal learning disorder, or (B)  
163 collaborations of such institutions, professionals or organizations;

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

168 (5) Recommend standards for promotion to the various ranks of fire  
169 departments;

170 (6) Be authorized, with the approval of the Commissioner of  
171 Emergency Services and Public Protection, to apply for, receive and  
172 distribute any state, federal or private funds or contributions available  
173 for training and education of fire fighting personnel;

174 (7) Recommend that the Commissioner of Emergency Services and  
175 Public Protection approve or reject the establishment of, or, when  
176 appropriate, suspend or revoke the approval of, regional fire schools in  
177 accordance with section 7-323u; [and]

178 (8) Advise the Division of Fire Services Administration within the  
179 Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection on the  
180 management of the Statewide Fire Service Disaster Response Plan;

181 (9) Implement the recommendations of the study of the fire service  
182 authorized pursuant to subdivision (36) of subsection (b) of section 41  
183 of public act 23-204; and

184 [(8)] (10) Submit to the Governor, the [Joint Legislative Management  
185 Committee of the General Assembly] joint standing committee of the  
186 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety  
187 and security, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, and the  
188 Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection an annual  
189 report (A) relating to the activities, recommendations and  
190 accomplishments of the commission, and (B) making recommendations  
191 on the funding necessary for the operation of, the maintenance of and  
192 capital improvements to the state fire school and regional fire schools.

193 (b) The commission may recommend, and the Commissioner of

194 Emergency Services and Public Protection may adopt, regulations in  
195 accordance with the provisions of chapter 54 as necessary to implement  
196 the provisions of this section.

197 Sec. 4. Section 7-323n of the general statutes is repealed and the  
198 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

199 [There is established an Office of State Fire Administration, which  
200 office] The Division of State Fire Services Administration within the  
201 Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection shall: [(a)] (1)  
202 Carry out the provisions of this part; [(b)] (2) administer the state's  
203 responsibilities under federal laws relevant to fire service; [(c)] (3)  
204 develop a master plan for fire prevention and control; and [(d)] (4) carry  
205 out any other function which the commission may devise. [Subject to  
206 the provisions of chapter 67, the commission may appoint such clerical  
207 and other assistants as it may deem necessary to carry out the provisions  
208 of this section.]

209 Sec. 5. Section 7-323o of the general statutes is repealed and the  
210 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

211 (a) There is established the position of State Fire Administrator. [who]  
212 Prior to July 1, 2025, the State Fire Administrator shall be recommended  
213 by the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and be appointed by  
214 the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection. [and  
215 who] Upon a vacancy in the position of State Fire Administrator  
216 occurring on or after July 1, 2025, the Commission on Fire Prevention  
217 and Control may recommend candidates for the position of State Fire  
218 Administrator to the commissioner, and the commissioner shall appoint  
219 such State Fire Administrator, who shall be qualified for the position by  
220 at least five years of experience in the fire service.

221 (b) The Division of Fire Services Administration shall:

222 [(1) Carry out the requirements of section 7-323n; (2) administer]

223 (1) Administer federal funds and grants allocated to the fire services



- 224 of the state; [(3) provide]
- 225 (2) Provide technical assistance and guidance to fire fighting forces of  
226 any state or municipal agency; [(4) develop]
- 227 (3) Develop a centralized information and audiovisual library  
228 regarding fire prevention and control; [(5) accumulate]
- 229 (4) Accumulate, disseminate and analyze fire prevention data; [(6)  
230 recommend]
- 231 (5) Recommend specifications of fire service materials and equipment  
232 and assist in the purchasing thereof; [(7) assist]
- 233 (6) Assist in mutual aid coordination; [(8) coordinate]
- 234 (7) Coordinate fire programs with those of the other states; [(9) assist]
- 235 (8) Assist in communications coordination; [(10) establish]
- 236 (9) Establish and maintain a fire service information program; [and  
237 (11) review]
- 238 (10) Review and approve the purchase of fire apparatus or equipment  
239 at state institutions, facilities and properties; [and, on and after July 1,  
240 1985, coordinate the training and education of fire service personnel at  
241 such institutions, facilities and properties.]
- 242 (11) Recommend and provide reports on revisions to statutes relating  
243 to firefighter training and fire prevention and control;
- 244 (12) Advise and assist the Commission on Fire Prevention and  
245 Control regarding legislative proposals;
- 246 (13) Encourage the expansion and improvement of existing regional  
247 firefighter training facilities in cooperation with the Commission on Fire  
248 Prevention and Control;
- 249 (14) Administer the state fire school and regional fire schools;

250 (15) Administer certification examinations, testing procedures and  
251 reciprocity recognition for credentials in the fire service disciplines;

252 (16) Manage the Statewide Fire Service Disaster Response Plan, with  
253 the advice of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control; and

254 (17) Make recommendations to the Commission on Fire Prevention  
255 and Control and the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public  
256 Protection pertaining to the operational funding of the state fire school  
257 and regional fire schools.

258 (c) The provisions of this section shall not be construed to apply to  
259 forest fire prevention and control programs administered by the  
260 Commissioner of Energy and Environmental Protection pursuant to  
261 sections 23-33 to 23-57, inclusive.

262 Sec. 6. Section 7-313m of the general statutes is repealed and the  
263 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

264 (a) Not later than January 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the chief  
265 of a volunteer fire department for a distressed municipality, as defined  
266 in section 32-9p, shall submit to the [State Fire Administrator] Division  
267 of Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency  
268 Services and Public Protection a report on the yearly average of the  
269 number of volunteer firefighters from such municipality's volunteer fire  
270 department who enrolled in Firefighter I certification and recruit  
271 training based on the preceding four years, except the year commencing  
272 January 1, 2020, shall not be included in any such four preceding years  
273 for purposes of calculating such average.

274 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, and each fiscal year  
275 thereafter, the [State Fire Administrator] Division of Fire Services  
276 Administration shall award a grant to any distressed municipality with  
277 a volunteer fire department for the purposes of covering costs related to  
278 the provision of Firefighter I certification and recruit training for  
279 volunteer firefighters at regional fire schools. The amount of such grant  
280 award for each such distressed municipality shall be equal to the

281 product of (1) the average cost of a Firefighter I certification and recruit  
282 training program at a regional fire school, and (2) the average number  
283 of volunteer firefighters from such distressed municipality's volunteer  
284 fire department who enrolled at a regional fire school for such  
285 certification and training.

286 (c) Not later than February 1, 2022, and annually thereafter, the [State  
287 Fire Administrator] Division of Fire Services Administration shall  
288 submit, in accordance with the provisions of section 11-4a, to the joint  
289 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
290 matters relating to appropriations and the budgets of state agencies a  
291 report on the (1) reports submitted by the chiefs of volunteer fire  
292 departments of distressed municipalities pursuant to subsection (a) of  
293 this section, and (2) average cost of a Firefighter I certification and  
294 recruit training program at a regional fire school.

295 Sec. 7. Section 7-323s of the general statutes is repealed and the  
296 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

297 (a) The [State Fire Administrator] Division of Fire Services  
298 Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and  
299 Public Protection, within available appropriations, shall develop model  
300 guidelines, on or before January 1, 2007, to be used by municipalities  
301 with paid municipal emergency personnel and municipalities with  
302 volunteer emergency personnel in entering into agreements authorizing  
303 volunteer emergency personnel to serve during personal time.

304 (b) A municipality with paid municipal emergency personnel and a  
305 municipality with volunteer emergency personnel may enter into an  
306 agreement authorizing paid emergency personnel to serve during  
307 personal time as active members of a volunteer fire department in the  
308 municipality in which they reside. In developing such agreements, such  
309 municipalities shall consider the model guidelines developed by the  
310 [State Fire Administrator] Division of Fire Services Administration  
311 within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection  
312 pursuant to subsection (a) of this section.

313 (c) The municipalities that are parties to an agreement entered into  
314 under subsection (b) of this section may request the Labor  
315 Commissioner to provide assistance, within available appropriations, in  
316 resolving such issues arising out of the agreement as the commissioner  
317 deems appropriate.

318 Sec. 8. Section 7-323v of the general statutes is repealed and the  
319 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2025*):

320 (a) The [State Fire Administrator] Division of Fire Services  
321 Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and  
322 Public Protection shall, within available appropriations, pay five  
323 hundred dollars to each volunteer fire company for each call to which it  
324 responds on (1) a limited access highway, designated pursuant to  
325 section 13b-27, (2) the section of the highway known as the Berlin  
326 Turnpike, which begins at the end of the existing Wilbur Cross Parkway  
327 in the town of Meriden and extends northerly along Route 15 to the  
328 beginning of a section of limited access highway in the town of  
329 Wethersfield known as South Meadows Expressway, or (3) the section  
330 of Route 8 in the town of Beacon Falls which is within the boundaries of  
331 the Naugatuck State Forest.

332 (b) No municipality that provides funds to a volunteer fire company  
333 may reduce such funding based on the payments that such company  
334 receives, or is anticipated to receive, under subsection (a) of this section.

335 Sec. 9. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2025*) Any regional fire school may  
336 receive and use federal, state or private funds or contributions for the  
337 facilities and operations of such school.

338 Sec. 10. (*Effective from passage*) (a) There is established a working  
339 group to make recommendations regarding the structure and  
340 operations of the Office of State Fire Marshal and the Office of Education  
341 and Data Management within the Department of Administrative  
342 Services in order to effectively administer code development, code  
343 enforcement, fire prevention and fire investigation functions.

344 (b) The working group shall consist of the following members:

345 (1) The chairpersons, vice-chairpersons and ranking members of the  
346 joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
347 matters relating to public safety and security, or their designees;

348 (2) The Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection,  
349 or the commissioner's designee;

350 (3) The Commissioner of Administrative Services, or the  
351 commissioner's designee;

352 (4) The head of the Office of Education and Data Management within  
353 the Department of Administrative Services; and

354 (5) A representative of the Connecticut State Fire Marshals  
355 Association, who shall be appointed by the chairpersons of the joint  
356 standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of  
357 matters relating to public safety and security.

358 (c) All initial appointments to the working group shall be made not  
359 later than July 1, 2024. Any vacancy shall be filled by the appointing  
360 authority.

361 (d) The working group shall select a chairperson from among its  
362 members. Such chairperson shall schedule the first meeting of the  
363 working group, which shall be held not later than August 1, 2024.

364 (e) The administrative staff of the joint standing committee of the  
365 General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public safety  
366 and security shall serve as administrative staff of the working group.

367 (f) Not later than January 1, 2025, the working group shall submit a  
368 report on its findings and recommendations to the joint standing  
369 committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters  
370 relating to public safety and security, in accordance with the provisions  
371 of section 11-4a of the general statutes. The working group shall  
372 terminate on the date that it submits such report or January 1, 2025,

373 whichever is later.

374 Sec. 11. Section 7-323j of the general statutes is repealed and the  
 375 following is substituted in lieu thereof (*Effective July 1, 2024*):

376 As used in this part, "commission" means the Commission on Fire  
 377 Prevention and Control; "municipality" means town, city, consolidated  
 378 town and city, consolidated town and borough, borough, school district,  
 379 fire district, fire and sewer district, sewer district, lighting district or any  
 380 other municipal corporation or taxing district upon which is placed the  
 381 duty of, or which has itself assumed the duty of, protecting its  
 382 inhabitants from loss by fire; "fire fighting duties" means and includes  
 383 duties performed in connection with the suppression and prevention of  
 384 fires, fire training and rescue, fire investigation, arson investigation,  
 385 details and assignments to protect the public safety against fire and  
 386 other related work; "firefighters" means any person who is regularly  
 387 employed and paid by any municipality or by a contractor which is a  
 388 nonprofit corporation for the purpose of performing fire fighting duties  
 389 for a municipality on an average of not less than thirty-five hours per  
 390 week or any volunteer who performs fire fighting duties. [and who  
 391 elects to cooperate with the commission in accordance with section 7-  
 392 323m.]

393 Sec. 12. Section 7-323m of the general statutes is repealed. (*Effective*  
 394 *July 1, 2025*)

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	July 1, 2025	29-1b
Sec. 2	from passage	7-323k
Sec. 3	July 1, 2025	7-323l
Sec. 4	July 1, 2025	7-323n
Sec. 5	July 1, 2025	7-323o
Sec. 6	July 1, 2025	7-313m
Sec. 7	July 1, 2025	7-323s
Sec. 8	July 1, 2025	7-323v
Sec. 9	July 1, 2025	New section

Sec. 10	<i>from passage</i>	New section
Sec. 11	<i>July 1, 2024</i>	7-323j
Sec. 12	<i>July 1, 2025</i>	Repealer section

*The following Fiscal Impact Statement and Bill Analysis are prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and do not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose. In general, fiscal impacts are based upon a variety of informational sources, including the analyst's professional knowledge. Whenever applicable, agency data is consulted as part of the analysis, however final products do not necessarily reflect an assessment from any specific department.*

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### **OFA Fiscal Note**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None

### **Explanation**

The bill results in no fiscal impact to the state or municipalities because each of the following can be accomplished with existing resources.

The bill (1) establishes the Division of Fire Services Administration as the successor to the Office of State Fire Administration and expands the statutory responsibilities of the division, (2) changes the membership of the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and updates the commission's statutory responsibilities, (3) establishes a working group to make recommendations regarding the structure and operations of the Office of State Fire Marshal and the Office of Education and Data Management within the Department of Administrative Services, and (4) makes various other conforming and procedural changes.

House "A" strikes the underlying bill and its associated fiscal impact and results in the impact described above.

### **The Out Years**

**State Impact:** None

**Municipal Impact:** None



**OLR Bill Analysis****sHB 5483 (as amended by House "A")\******AN ACT ESTABLISHING AND TRANSFERRING VARIOUS FUNCTIONS TO A DIVISION OF FIRE SERVICES ADMINISTRATION WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION AND REVISING THE POWERS AND COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL.*****SUMMARY**

This bill eliminates the Office of State Fire Administration and creates a Division of Fire Services Administration within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) as a successor agency. It assigns jurisdiction of this new division to the state fire administrator and reassigns the administrator's current duties to the division and expands on them.

Among other things, the bill makes several changes to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control, including expanding its membership and its powers and duties, such as advising the new division on the management of the Statewide Fire Service Disaster Response Plan. It also expressly allows any regional fire school to receive and use federal, state, or private funds or contributions for the school's facilities and operations (§ 9). Additionally, the bill creates a working group to make recommendations on the structure and operations of the Department of Administrative Services' (DAS) Office of the State Fire Marshal and Office of Education and Data Management.

The bill also makes conforming and technical changes.

\*House Amendment "A" principally (1) removes provisions merging the DAS Office of the State Fire Marshal and Office of Education and Data Administration into the newly created division; (2) makes the state fire administrator instead of the DESPP commissioner the division's

administrative head; (3) modifies the changes to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control's membership and duties, including removing appointments by the six legislative leaders; (4) requires the state fire administrator to have at least five years of experience in the fire service; and (5) adds the working group provision.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2025, except the changes to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and creation of the working group are effective upon passage and the deletion of a reference to a statute that the bill repeals is effective July 1, 2024.

### **§§ 1 & 4-8 — DIVISION OF FIRE SERVICES ADMINISTRATION**

The bill requires that the functions, powers, duties, and personnel of the Office of State Fire Administration be transferred to the Division of Fire Services Administration. Additionally, any order or regulation of the office that is in force on the effective date of the bill must continue in force and effect as an order or regulation of the division until it is amended, repealed, or superseded. The bill makes conforming changes to carry out this transfer, including requiring the division, rather than the Office of State Fire Administration, to administer the state's responsibilities under federal laws relevant to fire services and to develop a master plan for fire prevention and control.

Under the bill, the state fire administrator is the Division of Fire Services Administration's administrative head. Under current law, the state fire administrator must be recommended by the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and appointed by the DESPP commissioner. Beginning July 1, 2025, and upon a vacancy of the position, the bill instead allows the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control to recommend candidates to the DESPP commissioner, who must appoint someone with at least five years of experience in the fire service.

The bill also transfers the state fire administrator's current duties to the Division of Fire Services Administration and adds new ones. Specifically, whereas current law requires the state fire administrator to

coordinate the training and education of fire service personnel at state institutions, facilities, and properties, the bill instead requires the division to do the following:

1. advise and assist the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control on legislative proposals;
2. encourage the expansion and improvement of existing regional firefighter training facilities in cooperation with the commission;
3. administer the state fire school, regional fire schools, certification examinations, testing procedures, and reciprocity recognition for credentials in the fire service disciplines;
4. manage the Statewide Fire Service Disaster Response Plan, with the advice of the commission; and
5. make recommendations to the commission and DESPP commissioner on the operational funding of the state fire school and regional fire schools.

The bill also requires the division to recommend and give reports on revisions to statutes on firefighter training and fire prevention and control. (The bill does not specify to whom these recommendations and reports must be sent.)

The bill further requires the division to approve the purchase of fire apparatus or equipment at state institutions, facilities, and properties, in addition to reviewing them as under current law.

## **§ 2 — COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL MEMBERSHIP**

On June 30, 2025, the bill ends the term of any Commission on Fire Prevention and Control member appointed by that date and makes several changes to the commission's membership beginning July 1, 2025. Generally, it increases the commission's size from 14 voting members to 18 voting members and three nonvoting members. It also changes its composition from 12 gubernatorial appointees and two ex-officio,

voting members to 14 gubernatorial appointees, four legislative appointees, and three ex-officio, non-voting members. It additionally requires members of the Connecticut State Firefighters Association, Inc.'s education committee to serve as a commission subcommittee on matters relating to fire schools.

Under current law, the commission consists of the state fire marshal and the Connecticut State Colleges and Universities (CSCU) president (or their respective designees) and 12 members appointed by the governor, representing six specified entities. The bill retains the fire marshal on the commission but eliminates his authority to vote or assign a designee and removes the CSCU president. The bill changes the governor's current appointments by (1) requiring one of the two members from the Connecticut State Firefighters Association be the chairperson of the association's education committee and (2) reducing the number of Connecticut Conference of Municipalities appointees from two to one. It adds three gubernatorial appointments, specifically two members of the Connecticut Career Fire Chiefs' Association and one representative of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns.

Beyond these changes, the bill adds four new voting members as follows:

1. one representative of the Connecticut Council of Small Towns, appointed by the Public Safety and Security Committee's House chairperson;
2. one representative of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, appointed by the Public Safety and Security Committee's Senate chairperson;
3. one member of the Connecticut Fire Equipment Mechanics Association, appointed by the Public Safety and Security Committee's House ranking member; and
4. one representative of the Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board, appointed by the Public Safety and Security Committee's

Senate ranking member.

The bill also adds the following two officials (or their designees) as nonvoting members: the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection Forestry Division's forest protection supervisor and the DESPP State Police Fire and Explosion Investigation Unit's commanding officer.

By law, appointed members are appointed to three-year terms; the bill allows members to continue to serve until a successor is appointed and requires any vacancy to be filled by the appointing authority for the unexpired portion of the term. As under current law for the governor's appointments, the bill requires each organization to be represented on the commission to submit a list of nominees to the appropriate appointing authority annually by July 15.

As under existing law, appointees must be qualified, by experience or education, in the fields of fire protection, fire prevention, fire suppression, firefighting, and related fields.

The bill sunsets, on June 30, 2025, the current commission leadership process under which it elects from its membership a chairperson, vice chairperson, and secretary who must serve a one-year term starting on October 1 of the year in which they are elected. The bill requires their terms to expire on June 30, 2025, and expressly states that nothing in the bill may prevent their reelection. Beginning July 1, 2025, the bill requires the governor to appoint the commission's chairperson from its membership, and the commission must elect from its membership a vice chairperson and secretary, who must all serve one-year terms. As with current leadership, nothing in the bill prevents them from being reelected.

### **§§ 3 & 4 — COMMISSION ON FIRE PREVENTION AND CONTROL POWERS AND DUTIES**

The bill makes several changes to the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control's powers and duties. The bill specifically requires the commission to set standards for fire service training and education

programs, rather than to do so on a voluntary basis.

The bill further requires the commission do the following:

1. advise the Division of Fire Services Administration on the management of the Statewide Fire Service Disaster Response Plan;
2. implement the recommendations of the DESPP study on issues facing fire services in the state that was authorized by the 2023 budget implementer; and
3. make recommendations on the funding needed for operating, maintaining, and making capital improvements to the state fire school and regional fire schools as part of the existing annual report it must submit to the governor, legislature, and DESPP commissioner.

The bill requires the commission to submit this annual report to the Public Safety and Security Committee, rather than the Legislative Management Committee as current law requires.

The bill eliminates the commission's authority to appoint clerical and other assistants it deems necessary to carry out the Office of State Fire Administration's functions.

#### **§ 10 — WORKING GROUP**

The bill creates a working group to make recommendations on the structure and operations of the DAS Office of the State Fire Marshal and Office of Education and Data Management to effectively administer code development, code enforcement, fire prevention, and fire investigation functions. The working group must report its findings and recommendations to the Public Safety and Security Committee by January 1, 2025. It terminates on the date it submits the report, or January 1, 2025, whichever is later.

The working group consists of the following members:

1. the Public Safety and Security Committee’s chairpersons, vice-chairpersons, and ranking members (or their designees);
2. the DESPP and DAS commissioners (or their designees);
3. the head of the DAS Office of Education and Data Management; and
4. a representative of the Connecticut State Fire Marshals Association, who must be appointed by the Public Safety and Security Committee’s chairpersons.

All initial appointments to the working group must be made by July 1, 2024. The appointing authority must fill any vacancies.

Under the bill, the working group must select a chairperson from among its members. The chairperson must schedule the group’s first meeting, which must be held by August 1, 2024. The Public Safety and Security Committee’s administrative staff must serve as the working group’s administrative staff.

#### **§§ 11 & 12 — APPLICABILITY OF FIRE SERVICE LAWS TO SPECIFIED FIRE DEPARTMENTS**

The bill repeals a law that provides that (1) the state statutes concerning the Commission on Fire Prevention and Control and the Office of State Fire Administration do not apply to any (a) municipality that employs fewer than six paid firefighters or (b) volunteer fire department or its employees or members and (2) these municipalities and volunteer fire departments may elect to cooperate with the commission regarding the statutes. In doing so, it subjects these municipalities and volunteer fire departments to these statutes. The bill also makes a conforming change.

#### **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 25    Nay 0    (03/19/2024)