

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-934
Title: AN ACT REQUIRING PAYMENTS TO VOLUNTEER FIRE COMPANIES THAT RESPOND TO CALLS IN STATE PARKS AND STATE FORESTS.
Vote Date: 3/16/2023
Vote Action: JOINT FAVORABLE CHANGE OF REFERENCE
PH Date: 2/14/2023
File No.:

***Disclaimer:** The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Safety and Security Committee

Co-Sponsors:

[Rep. Kara Rochelle, 104th Dist.](#)

REASONS FOR BILL:

Many emergency volunteer departments in Connecticut depend on the local taxpayers for their revenue. Often these departments find themselves called out to emergencies located on limited access roads or State Parks and Forests. When they respond to these calls it often involves situations that require a high level of training due to terrain and several other factors. The cost to train the personnel, purchase and maintain any special equipment needed would be supplemented by the state paying to these towns \$500.00 per emergency call.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

James Baldis, Chief of Department, Simsbury Volunteer Fire Company

Chief Baldis supports this bill. Emergency volunteers provide services everywhere except big cities, they are first responders to State Parks and Forests which are in many rural areas. Connecticut is known for its forests and parks which offer many recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Simsbury is an example of a town that has State Forests and Parks. Simsbury is home to Talcott Mountain State Park which attracts hikers all year. There are times that Simsbury is called to rescue or help someone who finds themselves in trouble. These rescues often require keen skills, specialized equipment and can be labor intensive. These calls are done without resources from the state. Connecticut needs to support these services.

Tracey Hanson, First Selectman, Town of Voluntown

Ms. Hanson supports this bill. Voluntown is almost 70% state forest. Though they have a small but mighty volunteer fire department it persistently goes to any calls regarding search and rescue in Pachaug State Forest. This \$500.00 would go directly to the fire department and would help to provide new equipment that is needed for use during such emergencies. SB934 would be of great benefit to Voluntown and the many other towns that serve these communities.

Mike Muszynski, Chief Strategy Officer Manager, Connecticut Conference of Municipalities

Mr. Muszynski supports this bill. Very often these volunteer fire departments respond to emergencies in their communities, state parks and forests. These emergencies are not just for their community but those visiting. These responses require allocation of resources and expenses which are supported by the people who pay property taxes in the municipalities. The state who is responsible for the state parks and forests should provide funds to these departments who provide services.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None Expressed

Reported by: Bonnie Gray, Assistant Clerk

Date: 03/16/23