



Senate

General Assembly

File No. 138

February Session, 2024

Senate Bill No. 231

Senate, March 27, 2024

The Committee on Public Safety and Security reported through SEN. GASTON of the 23rd Dist., Chairperson of the Committee on the part of the Senate, that the bill ought to pass.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES TO LAW ENFORCEMENT UNITS AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS.

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

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) For purposes of this
2 section, "law enforcement unit" has the same meaning as provided in
3 section 7-294a of the general statutes.

4 (b) For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, and each fiscal year
5 thereafter, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection
6 shall, within available appropriations, administer a program to provide
7 grants to law enforcement units and municipal and volunteer fire
8 departments to obtain unmanned aerial vehicles.

9 (c) Not later than October 1, 2024, the department shall develop
10 eligibility criteria to be used in selecting among applicants for such
11 grants, develop application forms and deadlines and post in a
12 conspicuous location on the department's Internet web site a description

13 of the grant program that includes, but is not limited to, such criteria,
14 forms and deadlines.

15 (d) Not later than January 1, 2026, and annually thereafter, the
16 department shall submit a report, in accordance with the provisions of
17 section 11-4a of the general statutes, to the joint standing committee of
18 the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to public
19 safety and security. Such report shall include information for the
20 preceding calendar year on the number of applications for grants that
21 were received, the number of grants that were awarded and a list of the
22 law enforcement units and municipal and volunteer fire departments
23 that received grants.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>from passage</i>	New section

PS *Joint Favorable*

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.

OFA Fiscal Note

State Impact:

Agency Affected	Fund-Effect	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection	GF - Potential Cost	87,954	87,954
State Comptroller - Fringe Benefits ¹	GF - Potential Cost	34,219	34,219
Resources of the General Fund	GF - Potential Cost	See Below	See Below

Note: GF=General Fund

Municipal Impact:

Municipalities	Effect	FY 25 \$	FY 26 \$
Various Municipal and Volunteer Fire Departments	Potential Savings	See Below	See Below
Various Municipal Police Departments	Potential Savings	See Below	See Below

Explanation

The bill, which requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to administer a grant program for law enforcement units and fire departments to buy unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), results in a potential cost to the state of at least \$122,173 and potential savings to various municipal police departments and various fire departments in FY 25 and FY 26. The potential cost is

¹The fringe benefit costs for most state employees are budgeted centrally in accounts administered by the Comptroller. The estimated active employee fringe benefit cost associated with most personnel changes is 41.25% of payroll in FY 25.

contingent upon funding being made available for the grant program.²

Depending on the requirements of the program, the complexity of the applications, and the number of applications received, DESPP may need to hire one emergency management program specialist, resulting in a potential cost to DESPP of \$87,954 for salary and other expenses and a potential cost to the Office of the State Comptroller of \$34,219 for fringe benefits in FY 25 and FY 26.

The cost of UAVs used by first responders varies widely and depend on the capabilities required and the UAV manufacturer. Such UAVs cost approximately \$10,000 each but may range in price from \$5,000 to over \$50,000. There may also be additional training, software, and equipment expenses that are incidental to purchasing a UAV. There are over 400 organizations in the state eligible to receive grants under this program.

The Out Years

The annualized ongoing fiscal impact identified above would continue into the future subject to funding being made available for the grant program and employee wage increases.

²The bill does not allocate funds from any source. Historically, DESPP has received funds for similar programs from a variety of sources including appropriations, bond authorizations, and federal funds (including ARPA). If DESPP receives state funding, it is assumed to be a general fund appropriation or bond authorization.

OLR Bill Analysis**SB 231*****AN ACT ESTABLISHING A GRANT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE UNMANNED AERIAL VEHICLES TO LAW ENFORCEMENT UNITS AND FIRE DEPARTMENTS.*****SUMMARY**

This bill requires the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to administer a grant program for law enforcement units and municipal and volunteer fire departments to buy unmanned aerial vehicles (i.e., drones). The department must do this within available appropriations, starting in FY 25 and each fiscal year after.

Under the bill, DESPP must develop the program's eligibility criteria, application forms, and deadlines by October 1, 2024, and post them along with a description of the program on the department's website.

DESPP must also annually report, starting by January 1, 2026, to the Public Safety and Security Committee on the program. The report must include information for the previous calendar year on (1) the number of grant applications that were received and awarded and (2) a list of law enforcement units and municipal and volunteer fire departments that got grants.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

BACKGROUND***Law Enforcement Unit***

By law, a "law enforcement unit" is any state or municipal agency or department (or tribal agency or department created and governed under a memorandum of agreement) whose primary functions include enforcing criminal or traffic laws; preserving public order; protecting

life and property; or preventing, detecting, or investigating crime (CGS § 7-294a(8)).

Related Bill

sSB 3, favorably reported by the General Law Committee, among other things, prohibits public entities (including police and fire departments) from operating drones assembled or manufactured by certain foreign entities (e.g., China and Russia) starting October 1, 2025.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 23 Nay 0 (03/12/2024)