

Colorado Legislative Council Staff Fiscal Note

**STATE and LOCAL
FISCAL IMPACT**

Drafting Number: LLS 15-0130	Date: January 16, 2015
Prime Sponsor(s): Rep. Hamner; Buck Sen. Roberts	Bill Status: House Local Government
	Fiscal Analyst: Clare Pramuk (303-866-2677)

BILL TOPIC: VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION

Fiscal Impact Summary*	FY 2015-2016	FY 2016-2017
State Revenue		
State Expenditures	Minimal workload increase. See State Expenditures section.	
FTE Position Change		
Appropriation Required: None.		

* This summary shows changes from current law under the bill for each fiscal year.

Summary of Legislation

This bill, ***recommended by the Wildfire Matters Review Committee***, creates the "Volunteer Fire Department Organization Act" which lists the requirements for creating a volunteer fire department (VFD) in areas of the state lacking organized fire protection services. These requirements include:

- organizing under the Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act;
- entering into an agreement with the state or local government that has jurisdiction over fire response in the VFDs service area specifying the types of fire protection services to be provided and service area boundaries; and
- registering with the Division of Fire Prevention and Control in the Department of Public Safety (DPS).

VFDs in good standing are eligible to establish a schedule of charges, and receive state funding assistance, including state grant awards. Finally, the bill clarifies that VFDs organized under this bill are not liable for civil damages when taking part in firefighting efforts in good faith.

Background

A number of VFDs in Colorado currently operate without governmental organization and authority. Of the state's approximately 40 nonprofit VFDs, many rely on contracts or other funding from local governments. Because these VFDs are not recognized in statute as part of the state's fire service, they are often ineligible for grants, training, and other assistance.

State Expenditures

The Division of Fire Prevention and Control in the DPS will have a minimal increase in workload as a result of this bill. The division will develop a registration form and collect annual registrations from VFDs. The division will provide technical assistance to VFDs including information on how to apply for state funding assistance including grants. This workload is expected to be accomplished within existing appropriations.

While VFDs will be eligible for state funding, the bill does not increase the overall funds available for fire departments.

Local Government Impact

To the extent that VFDs are awarded grant funds, the amount of funding available for local governments is reduced.

Effective Date

The bill takes effect upon signature of the Governor, or upon becoming law without his signature.

State and Local Government Contacts

Counties
Public Safety

Local Affairs
Sheriffs

Municipalities
Special Districts