

Public Safety and Security Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: HB-5460 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING STATE-WIDE FIRE PROTECTION.

Vote Date: 3/17/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/12/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Public Safety and Security Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill was raised by the Public Safety and Security Committee to better equip municipalities with strategic planning when faced with fire-related incidents. This bill would require municipalities to adopt a local fire protection plan that would be submitted to the State Fire Administrator for review and rating. It also requires the Commission on Fire Prevention to adopt standards for local fire protection, establishing a standardized system in which municipalities can base their plans on, ensuring the most up to date and best practices are shared across Connecticut's municipalities. It also creates a new "Connecticut Fire Program," in which DESPP can administer administrative and operational support to municipalities, enhancing safety measures and increasing accessibility to grant programs for otherwise potentially underfunded municipalities. Additionally, this bill increases the use of data collection to bridge a gap between the state level fire protection services and the municipalities. Lastly, this bill would increase safety measures and visibility for firefighters by eliminating a ban on red and blue lights being authorized to be used by only members of police forces.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

[Sean Scanlon, State Comptroller, State of Connecticut, Office of the Comptroller](#), thanks the committee for raising the importance of the bill. He says that it will improve the fire service in Connecticut. He highlighted sections of the bill that are relevant to their office, including sections 7,9 & 10. He urges the committee to adopt this bill.

[Ronnell Higgins, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection \(DESPP\)](#), the department raises concerns surrounding Section 1, they highlight that they see the value of having local fire departments maintain appropriate planning and preparedness documents. However, states that the agency lacks funding for such activities. They raise further concerns for other sections of the bill. They believe that the bill has strong ideas, but there would be many provisions that would need to include funding and resources, and for this reason they cannot fully support as written.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

[Connecticut Conference of Municipalities \(CCM\)](#), say that this legislation provides a framework for state and municipal leaders to gain a better understanding of the local needs and existing capabilities by developing a fire plan. They caution the Committee, saying that pointing out gaps in operations should come with guided support and funding, and not to accidentally create legal exposure. CCM states they are ready to collaborate on the modernization of the fire service, and encourage the Committee to ensure the framework remains an enabling partnership.

[Micheal Podzalin, Fire Commissioner](#), writes in support of the bill saying it is a thoughtful step towards modernizing Connecticut's fire services. He highlights the importance of this bill for small local fire stations, similar to the ones he works at. He says that the bill will improve planning, data collection, staffing support, and help ensure reliable emergency response.

[Joint Council of Connecticut Fire Service Organization \(Joint Council\)](#), writes in support of the bill. They request changes for lines 339-375 and notes further discussions about concerns have been held with the chairs.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

[Anonymous 31-39 and 43](#), writes in opposition of the bill due to potential state overreach.

Reported by: Emma Rybacki, Clerk
Megan Oros, Assist. Clerk

Date: 3/31/26