

HOUSE BILL 518

By Hill T

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 68, Chapter 102, relative to volunteer fire department grants.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 68, Chapter 102, Part 1, is amended by adding the following as a new section:

(a) A program, known as the volunteer firefighter equipment and training grant program, is created to annually provide grants to select volunteer fire departments to be used for the purchase of firefighting equipment or to meet local match requirements of federal grants for the purchase of firefighting equipment and training.

(b) It is the legislative intent to fund the program by providing a sum-sufficient appropriation in each fiscal year's annual appropriation bill.

(c) The commissioner of commerce and insurance shall promulgate rules in accordance with the Uniform Administrative Procedures Act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5, to establish guidelines for evaluating grant requests and determining which volunteer fire departments will receive grants, and to divide the state by county into east, middle, west, northeast, and southwest divisions.

(d) The commissioner of commerce and insurance shall decide which grants to award and disburse the grants to the selected volunteer fire departments. The total amount of grants awarded each year must be equally divided among the divisions created by rule pursuant to subsection (c). The commissioner shall endeavor to expend all funds appropriated to the program each year, and any funds remaining will not revert to the general fund but remain available for expenditure in subsequent fiscal years.

(e) As used in this section:

(1) "Firefighting equipment" means the equipment used by a firefighter to contain or extinguish fires and to protect the life of the firefighter, other than fire trucks or vehicles; and

(2) "Volunteer fire department" means a fire department recognized by the state fire marshal's office, pursuant to § 68-102-304, and classified by the Tennessee Fire Incident Reporting System (TFIRS) as a volunteer fire department.

SECTION 2. For the purposes of promulgating rules, this act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it. For all other purposes, this act shall take effect January 1, 2020, the public welfare requiring it.