SENATE FILE 594
BY COMMITTEE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

(SUCCESSOR TO SSB 1206)

(As Amended and Passed by the Senate March 18, 2025)

= New Language by the Senate

= Language Stricken by the Senate

A BILL FOR

An Act requiring the state fire marshal to conduct a study on the consolidation of fire protection services, and including effective date provisions.

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

Section 1. STATE FIRE MARSHAL — COUNTYWIDE FIRE PROTECTION SERVICES STUDY.

1. The state fire marshal shall conduct a study of fire protection services in this state to analyze whether a structure of countywide fire protection services would maximize fire protection coverage and emergency response times. The study shall be conducted in consultation with representatives from the following stakeholders:

a. The department of homeland security and emergency management.

b. The Iowa association of professional fire chiefs.

c. The Iowa fire chiefs' association.

d. The Iowa firefighters association.

e. The Iowa professional fire fighters.

f. The Iowa emergency management association.

g. At least one attorney licensed to practice law in this state with experience representing entities associated with fire protection services.

h. At least one representative from a city having a population of thirty-seven thousand or more as determined by the 2020 federal decennial census.

i. At least one representative from a city having a population of less than five thousand as determined by the 2020 federal decennial census.

j. At least one representative from a county having a population of ninety thousand or more as determined by the 2020 federal decennial census.

k. Four members of the general assembly serving as ex officio, nonvoting members, one representative to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, one representative to be appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives, one senator to be appointed by the president of the senate after consultation with the majority leader of the senate, and one senator to be appointed by the minority leader of the senate.

2. The countywide fire protection services study shall include all of the following:

a. A cost analysis for upfront and ongoing costs to provide consolidated countywide fire protection services systems. The analysis and recommendations shall include proposed funding mechanisms and potential consolidated funding resources that comply with local, state, and federal law. The analysis shall also include the potential effects countywide fire protection services could have on local authority expenditures and budgets.

b. An analysis of current fire protection coverage including current response times and recommendations for placement of service stations to maximize fire protection coverage and emergency response times in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

c. An analysis of current and future staffing needs including a proposed employment structure for countywide fire protection services that focuses on adequate employee pay and volunteer staffing, including benefits, stipends, or other compensation allowed in accordance with local, state, or federal law.

d. An analysis of current fire protection services equipment and future fire protection services equipment needs including proposed placement of fire protection services equipment in service stations to maximize fire protection coverage and emergency response times.

e. An analysis of current communication and dispatch challenges including proposed recommendations for more efficient and effective communications.

f. An analysis of the need for city and township fire protection services in relation to the implementation of a countywide fire protection service.

g. An analysis of existing countywide fire protection service programs in this state including outlining current processes and procedures. <u>The analysis under this paragraph</u>

must include outlines of any current or proposed fire protection service programs under chapter 28E, 357B, 357F, 357G, or 357J, and any other legal agreement, contract, or consolidated effort, including as part of a district.

h. An analysis of countywide fire protection services in other states, with an emphasis on midwest states, including an analysis of those fire protection programs in comparison to the fire protection needs of this state.

i. Recommendations for the implementation of countywide fire protection services in this state including proposed functionality and an emphasis on the potential impact of implementation on the four most populous counties in this state as determined by the 2020 federal decennial census, along with surrounding counties if a multicounty approach to fire protection services would be more beneficial based on the study's findings.

3. The state fire marshal shall submit a report of the study's findings to the general assembly on or before June 30, 2026.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE. This Act, being deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.