



NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY
AMENDMENT
Senate Bill 319

AMENDMENT NO. \_\_\_\_\_
(to be filled in by
Principal Clerk)

S319-ABR-92 [v.1]

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Amends Title [YES]
Second Edition

Date \_\_\_\_\_, 2024

Representative Bell

moves to amend the bill on page 1, line 5, by rewriting the line to read:

"ELECTRONIC MAILING OF REQUIRED COMMUNICATIONS; AND TO TO MAKE
PERMANENT THE FIREFIGHTERS' HEALTH BENEFITS PILOT PROGRAM AND TO
RENAME IT THE FIREFIGHTERS' CANCER INSURANCE PROGRAM; TO MODIFY
THE CURRENT PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF THE GROSS PREMIUMS TAX TO
FUND THE PROGRAM; TO INCREASE THE MONTHLY PAYMENT AND PENSION
FOR MEMBERS OF THE NORTH CAROLINA FIREFIGHTERS' AND RESCUE
SQUAD WORKERS' PENSION FUND; AND TO PROVIDE AN ALTERNATIVE
MEANS OF BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR FIREFIGHTING AND PREVENTION
SERVICES APPLICANTS LIVING IN NORTH CAROLINA FOR LONGER THAN FIVE
YEARS.";

and on page 4, lines 24 – 29, by rewriting the lines to read:

"FIREFIGHTERS' CANCER INSURANCE PROGRAM

SECTION 6.1 Chapter 58 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new
Article to read:

"Article 86A.

"Firefighters' Cancer Insurance Program.

"§ 58-86A-1. Firefighters' Cancer Insurance Program established; purpose.

There is hereby established the Firefighters' Cancer Insurance Program in the Office of the
State Fire Marshal. The purpose of the Program is to provide health benefits as authorized by
this Article to eligible firefighters with a new diagnosis of cancer on or after January 1, 2022.
The health benefits provided under this Program shall be supplemental to any other health
benefits authorized by law for firefighters. The Office of the State Fire Marshal shall administer
the Program instead of purchasing private insurance for that purpose, and the Office shall perform
this duty by contracting with a third-party administrator. The contracting procedure for the third-
party administrator is not subject to Article 3C of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes. The Office
of the State Fire Marshal may use up to ten percent (10%) of the funds appropriated in each fiscal
biennium for the Program for the reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by the Office in
administering the Program.



\* S 3 1 9 - A B R - 9 2 - V - 1 \*

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1 **"§ 58-86A-2. Definitions.**

2 The following definitions apply in this Article:

- 3 (1) Cancer. – Malignant neoplasms of the body that may be caused by exposure  
4 to heat, radiation, or a known carcinogen, as defined by the World Health  
5 Organization's International Agency for Research on Cancer.  
6 (2) Eligible firefighter. – A firefighter who meets the requirements of  
7 G.S. 58-86A-3.  
8 (3) Fire department. – Any organization that is not a federal agency, including  
9 any public or government-sponsored organization, that is located and based in  
10 this State and provides rescue, fire suppression, and related activities.  
11 (4) Firefighter. – As defined in G.S. 58-84-5(3a).

12 **"§ 58-86A-3. Eligibility.**

13 To be eligible to receive benefits under the Program, a firefighter:

- 14 (1) Must meet either of the following criteria:  
15 a. Have served in a North Carolina fire department or in a fire department  
16 on a military base in North Carolina for a minimum of five continuous  
17 years; provided, however, if a firefighter, during those five years,  
18 experiences a lapse in service of no more than six months, the  
19 firefighter shall not be ineligible to receive benefits under the  
20 Program.  
21 b. Have been included on the certified roster submitted to the North  
22 Carolina State Firefighters' Association pursuant to G.S. 58-86-25 for  
23 a period of no more than 10 years as "retired/nonactive" after the  
24 firefighter no longer meets the definition of the term "firefighter"  
25 under G.S. 58-84-5(3a).  
26 (2) Must have received a new diagnosis of cancer on or after January 1, 2022. A  
27 firefighter with a diagnosis of cancer prior to January 1, 2022, is not eligible  
28 for benefits in the Program for that previously diagnosed cancer type but  
29 remains eligible for benefits in the Program upon diagnosis of any other  
30 cancer type, even if the other cancer type diagnosed on or after January 1,  
31 2022, metastasized from a cancer diagnosed before January 1, 2022. A  
32 firefighter is not eligible to receive benefits under the Program if the  
33 firefighter is receiving benefits related to cancer under the North Carolina  
34 Workers' Compensation Act established in Article 1 of Chapter 97 of the  
35 General Statutes.

36 **"§ 58-86A-4. Benefits.**

37 The following benefits shall be provided under the Program:

- 38 (1) Lump sum benefit. – Not to exceed a total of seventy-four thousand dollars  
39 (\$74,000), a lump sum benefit of thirty-seven thousand dollars (\$37,000) for  
40 each diagnosis of cancer shall be payable to an eligible firefighter upon  
41 sufficient proof to the insurance carrier, the Department, the Office of the  
42 State Fire Marshal, or other applicable payor of a diagnosis of cancer by a

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1                   board-certified, licensed physician in the medical specialty appropriate for the  
2                   type of cancer diagnosed.

3                   (2) Disability benefit. – Upon sufficient proof to the insurance carrier, the  
4                   Department, the Office of the State Fire Marshal, or other applicable payor of  
5                   total disability resulting from the diagnosis of cancer or that the cancer  
6                   precludes the firefighter from serving as a firefighter, the following disability  
7                   benefits shall be paid to an eligible firefighter beginning six months after the  
8                   total disability or inability to perform the duties of a firefighter, whichever  
9                   applies:

10                   a. For a nonvolunteer firefighter. – A monthly benefit that is either (i)  
11                   equal to seventy-five percent (75%) of the firefighter's monthly salary  
12                   or (ii) five thousand dollars (\$5,000), whichever is less.

13                   b. For a volunteer firefighter. – A monthly benefit of one thousand five  
14                   hundred dollars (\$1,500).

15 **§ 58-86A-5. Limitations on disability benefit.**

16                   The following limitations apply to disability benefits under this section:

17                   (1) Disability benefits shall continue for no more than 36 consecutive months.

18                   (2) Any firefighter receiving disability benefits may be required to have his or her  
19                   condition reevaluated to determine if that firefighter has regained the ability  
20                   to perform the duties of a firefighter. If that reevaluation indicates that the  
21                   firefighter has regained the ability to perform the duties of a firefighter, then  
22                   the monthly disability benefits shall cease on the last day of the month the  
23                   reevaluation was conducted.

24                   (3) If there is no reevaluation performed under subdivision (2) of this section, but  
25                   the firefighter's treating physician determines that the firefighter is again able  
26                   to perform the duties of a firefighter, then the disability benefits shall cease on  
27                   the last day of the month that the physician made the determination.

28                   (4) If a firefighter returns to work as a firefighter before exhaustion of the 36  
29                   months of disability benefit an eligible firefighter may receive under this  
30                   section, and if there is a subsequent recurrence of disability caused by cancer  
31                   that again precludes the firefighter from performing the duties of a firefighter,  
32                   then the firefighter shall be entitled to any remaining monthly disability  
33                   benefits, not to exceed 36 months in total.

34                   (5) The monthly disability benefit shall be subordinate to any other benefit paid  
35                   from any source to the firefighter solely for a disability related to the cancer  
36                   diagnosis, so long as that source is not private insurance purchased solely by  
37                   the firefighter. Disability benefits under this section shall be limited to the  
38                   difference between the benefit amount paid by the other source and the  
39                   amounts specified under G.S. 58-86A-4(3).

40 **§ 58-86A-6. Reporting requirements.**

41                   On January 1 of each year, the Office of the State Fire Marshal shall submit a report to the  
42                   Joint Oversight Committee on General Government, the Governor, and the Fiscal Research  
43                   Division that includes all of the following information:

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- 1           (1) The number, type, and primary work location of all firefighters participating  
2           in the program. For purposes of this section, the term "type" means a  
3           volunteer, employee, contractor, or member of a rated and certified fire  
4           department, or employee of a county fire marshal's office whose sole duty is  
5           to act as fire marshal, deputy fire marshal, assistant fire marshal, or firefighter  
6           of the county.  
7           (2) The number of benefit claims filed, by type.  
8           (3) The types of cancer for which benefit claims were filed, by type.  
9           (4) All benefits paid out under this section, by type."

10       **SECTION 6.2.** Effective July 1, 2025, G.S. 105-228.5(d)(3) reads as rewritten:

11       "(d) Tax Rates; Disposition. –

- 12       ...
- 13       (3) Additional Rate on Property Coverage Contracts. – An additional tax at the  
14       rate of seventy-four hundredths percent (0.74%) applies to gross premiums on  
15       insurance contracts for property coverage. The tax is imposed on ten percent  
16       (10%) of the gross premiums from insurance contracts for automobile  
17       physical damage coverage and on one hundred percent (100%) of the gross  
18       premiums from all other contracts for property coverage. Twenty percent  
19       (20%) of the net proceeds of this additional tax must be credited to the  
20       Volunteer Fire Department Fund established in Article 87 of Chapter 58 of  
21       the General Statutes. Twenty percent (20%) of the net proceeds must be  
22       credited to the Department of Insurance for disbursement pursuant to  
23       G.S. 58-84-25. Up to twenty percent (20%); Ten percent (10%) of the net  
24       proceeds, as determined in accordance with G.S. 58-87-10(f), must be  
25       credited to the Workers' Compensation Fund. Fund established in G.S. 58-87-  
26       10, but in no event shall the Fund reserve exceed forty-five million dollars  
27       (\$45,000,000). Ten percent (10%) of the net proceeds must be credited to the  
28       Office of the State Fire Marshal in the Department of Insurance to be used to  
29       fund the Firefighters' Cancer Insurance Program established in Article 86A of  
30       Chapter 58 of the General Statutes, but in no event shall the amount credited  
31       to the Office of the State Fire Marshal exceed ten million dollars  
32       (\$10,000,000). The remaining net proceeds—proceeds, including the net  
33       proceeds that exceed the limits established in this subdivision for the Workers'  
34       Compensation Fund and the Office of the State Fire Marshal, must be credited  
35       to the General Fund. The additional tax imposed on property coverage  
36       contracts under this subdivision is a special purpose assessment based on gross  
37       premiums and not a gross premiums tax.  
38       ... ."

39       **SECTION 6.3.** G.S. 58-87-10 reads as rewritten:

40       "**§ 58-87-10. Workers' Compensation Fund for the benefit of certain safety workers.**

41       ...

42       (f) Funding Study. – The Office of the State Fire Marshal shall annually conduct an  
43       actuarial study that shall do all of the following:

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1        ...  
2            (3)    Calculate how much revenue from the State and from member premiums  
3                    would be required to meet the needs of the Fund for each of the following  
4                    scenarios:  
5                a.        The Fund receives ~~twenty percent (20%)~~ ten percent (10%) of the net  
6                    proceeds from the tax collected under G.S. 105-228.5(d)(3).

7        ...  
8        (g)    Allocation of Taxes. – The study conducted under subsection (f) of this section shall  
9                    be reviewed by the Office of State Budget and Management. On or before March 1 of each year,  
10                   the Office of State Budget and Management, in consultation with the Department of Insurance,  
11                   must notify the Secretary of Revenue of the amount required to meet the needs of the Fund, as  
12                   determined by the study, for the upcoming fiscal year. The Secretary of Revenue shall remit that  
13                   amount, subject to the ~~twenty percent (20%)~~ ten percent (10%) limitation in  
14                   G.S. 105-228.5(d)(3), to the Fund."

15                **SECTION 6.4.** G.S. 58-87A-1 reads as rewritten:  
16        **"§ 58-78A-1. Office of the State Fire Marshal.**

17        ...  
18        (b)    The Office of the State Fire Marshal shall be responsible for all of the following:  
19                    ...  
20                (9a)    Firefighters' Cancer Insurance Program, Article 86A of Chapter 58 of the  
21                    General Statutes.  
22                ... ."

23  
24        **NORTH CAROLINA FIREFIGHTERS' AND RESCUE SQUAD WORKERS' PENSION**  
25        **FUND**

26                **SECTION 7.1.** G.S. 58-86-35 reads as rewritten:  
27        **§ 58-86-35. Firefighters' application for membership in fund; monthly payments by**  
28                    **members; payments credited to separate accounts of members; termination of**  
29                    **membership.**

30                Those firefighters who are eligible pursuant to G.S. 58-86-25 may apply to the board for  
31                    membership. Each firefighter upon becoming a member of the fund shall pay the director of the  
32                    fund the sum of ~~ten dollars (\$10.00)~~ fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per month; each payment shall be  
33                    made no later than March 31 subsequent to the end of the calendar year in which the month  
34                    occurred. The Pension Fund shall not award fully credited service based on payments received  
35                    later than March 31 subsequent to the end of the calendar year in which the month occurred  
36                    unless the payment is applied as provided in G.S. 58-86-45(a1). The monthly payments shall be  
37                    credited to the separate account of the member and shall be kept by the custodian so it is available  
38                    for payment on withdrawal from membership or retirement.

39                A member may elect to terminate membership in the fund at any time and request the refund  
40                    of payments previously made to the fund. However, a member's delinquency in making the  
41                    monthly payments required by this section does not result in the termination of membership  
42                    without such an election by the member."

43                **SECTION 7.2.** G.S. 58-86-40 reads as rewritten:

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1 **"§ 58-86-40. Rescue squad worker's application for membership in funds; monthly**  
2 **payments by members; payments credited to separate accounts of members;**  
3 **termination of membership.**

4 Those rescue squad workers eligible pursuant to G.S. 58-86-30 may apply to the board for  
5 membership. Each eligible rescue squad worker upon becoming a member shall pay the director  
6 of the fund the sum of ~~ten dollars (\$10.00)~~ fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per month; each payment shall  
7 be made no later than March 31 subsequent to the end of the calendar year in which the month  
8 occurred. The Pension Fund shall not award fully credited service based on payments received  
9 later than March 31 subsequent to the end of the calendar year in which the month occurred  
10 unless the payment is applied as provided in G.S. 58-86-45(a1). The monthly payments shall be  
11 credited to the separate account of the member and shall be kept by the custodian so it is available  
12 for payment on withdrawal from membership or retirement.

13 A member may elect to terminate membership in the fund at any time and request the refund  
14 of payments previously made to the fund. However, a member's delinquency in making the  
15 monthly payments required by this section does not result in the termination of membership  
16 without such an election by the member."

17 **SECTION 7.3.** G.S. 58-86-55 reads as rewritten:

18 **"§ 58-86-55. Monthly pensions upon attaining the age of 55 years.**

19 (a) Any member who has served 20 years as an "eligible firefighter" or "eligible rescue  
20 squad worker" in the State of North Carolina, as provided in G.S. 58-86-25 and G.S. 58-86-30,  
21 and who has attained the age of 55 years is entitled to be paid a monthly pension from this fund.  
22 The monthly pension shall be in the amount of ~~one hundred seventy dollars (\$170.00)~~ one  
23 hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00) per month. Any retired firefighter receiving a pension  
24 shall, effective ~~July 1, 2008,~~ July 1, 2024, receive a pension of ~~one hundred seventy dollars~~  
25 ~~(\$170.00)~~ one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00) per month.

26 (b) Members shall pay ~~ten dollars (\$10.00)~~ fifteen dollars (\$15.00) per month as required  
27 by G.S. 58-86-35 and G.S. 58-86-40 for a period of no longer than 20 years. No "eligible rescue  
28 squad member" shall receive a pension prior to July 1, 1983.

29 (c) A member who is totally and permanently disabled while in the discharge of the  
30 member's official duties as a result of bodily injuries sustained or as a result of extreme exercise  
31 or extreme activity experienced in the course and scope of those official duties and who leaves  
32 the fire or rescue squad service because of this disability shall be entitled to be paid from the fund  
33 a monthly benefit in an amount of ~~one hundred seventy dollars (\$170.00)~~ one hundred seventy-  
34 five dollars (\$175.00) per month beginning the first month after the member's fifty-fifth birthday.  
35 All applications for disability are subject to the approval of the board who may appoint physicians  
36 to examine and evaluate the disabled member prior to approval of the application, and annually  
37 thereafter. Any disabled member shall not be required to make the monthly payment of ~~ten dollars~~  
38 ~~(\$10.00)~~ fifteen dollars (\$15.00) as required by G.S. 58-86-35 and G.S. 58-86-40.

39 (d) A member who is totally and permanently disabled for any cause, other than line of  
40 duty, who leaves the fire or rescue squad service because of this disability and who has at least  
41 10 years of service with the pension fund, may be permitted to continue making a monthly  
42 contribution of ~~ten dollars (\$10.00)~~ fifteen dollars (\$15.00) to the fund until the member has made  
43 contributions for a total of 240 months. The member shall upon attaining the age of 55 years be

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1 entitled to receive a pension as provided by this section. All applications for disability are subject  
2 to the approval of the board who may appoint physicians to examine and evaluate the disabled  
3 member prior to approval of the application and annually thereafter.

4 (d1) Benefits shall be paid in the following manner when a member is killed in the line of  
5 duty and the requirements of Article 12A of Chapter 143 of the General Statutes are met:

6 (1) If the member had been receiving a monthly pension fund benefit prior to  
7 being killed in the line of duty, there shall be paid to the member's principal  
8 beneficiary, if only one principal beneficiary is eligible and has not accepted  
9 a return of contributions, an amount of ~~one hundred seventy dollars (\$170.00)~~  
10 one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00) per month beginning the month  
11 following the member's month of death, payable until the beneficiary's death.  
12 If the member became a member prior to July 1, 2018, and had not designated  
13 a principal beneficiary prior to being killed in the line of duty, there shall be  
14 paid to the member's living spouse upon the spouse's application to the Board,  
15 an amount of ~~one hundred seventy dollars (\$170.00)~~ one hundred seventy-five  
16 dollars (\$175.00) per month beginning the month following the member's  
17 month of death, payable until the spouse's death.

18 ...

19 (3) If the member had not yet begun receiving a monthly benefit prior to being  
20 killed in the line of duty, there shall be paid to the member's principal  
21 beneficiary, if only one principal beneficiary is eligible and has not accepted  
22 a return of contributions, an amount of ~~one hundred seventy dollars (\$170.00)~~  
23 one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00) per month beginning the month  
24 following the month the member would have attained age 55, or if the member  
25 had already attained age 55, beginning the month following the member's  
26 month of death, payable until the beneficiary's death. If the member became a  
27 member prior to July 1, 2018, and had not designated a principal beneficiary  
28 prior to being killed in the line of duty, there shall be paid to the member's  
29 living spouse upon the spouse's application to the Board, an amount of ~~one~~  
30 ~~hundred seventy dollars (\$170.00)~~ one hundred seventy-five dollars (\$175.00)  
31 per month beginning the month following the month the member would have  
32 attained age 55, or if the member had attained age 55, beginning the month  
33 following the member's month of death, payable until the spouse's death.

34 ...

35 A beneficiary under this subsection shall not be required to make the monthly payment of ~~ten~~  
36 ~~dollars (\$10.00)~~ fifteen dollars (\$15.00) as required by G.S. 58-86-35 and G.S. 58-86-40 after  
37 the member has been killed in the line of duty.

38 ...

39 (e) A member who, because the member's residence is annexed by a city under Part 2 or  
40 Part 3 of Article 4A of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes, or whose department is closed  
41 because of an annexation by a city under Part 2 or Part 3 of Article 4A of Chapter 160A of the  
42 General Statutes, or whose volunteer department is taken over by a city or county, and because  
43 of such annexation or takeover is unable to perform as a firefighter or rescue squad worker of

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1 any status, and if the member has at least 10 years of service with the pension fund, may be  
2 permitted to continue making a monthly contribution of ~~ten dollars (\$10.00)~~ fifteen dollars  
3 (\$15.00) to the fund until the member has made contributions for a total of 240 months. The  
4 member upon attaining the age of 55 years and completion of such contributions shall be entitled  
5 to receive a pension as provided by this section. Any application to make monthly contributions  
6 under this section shall be subject to a finding of eligibility by the Board of Trustees upon  
7 application of the member.

8     ... ."

9  
10 **FIREFIGHTER & PREVENTION SERVICES BACKGROUND CHECKS**

11     **SECTION 8.1.** G.S. 153A-233 reads as rewritten:

12     "**§ 153A-233. Fire-fighting and prevention services.**

13     A county may establish, organize, equip, support, and maintain a fire department; may  
14 prescribe the duties of the fire department; may provide financial assistance to nonprofit  
15 volunteer fire departments; may contract for fire-fighting or prevention services with one or more  
16 counties, cities or other units of local government, nonprofit volunteer fire departments, or with  
17 an agency of the State government; and may for these purposes appropriate funds not otherwise  
18 limited as to use by law. A county shall ensure that any county, city or other unit of local  
19 government, or nonprofit volunteer fire department with whom the county contracts for  
20 fire-fighting or prevention services shall obtain a criminal history record check for an applicant  
21 over the age of 18 prior to offering that applicant a paid or volunteer position providing  
22 fire-fighting or prevention services. The criminal history record check shall be conducted and  
23 evaluated as provided in ~~G.S. 143B-943.~~ G.S. 143B-943, or, if an applicant has been a resident  
24 of North Carolina for over five years and reports no charges or convictions on the application,  
25 the record check requirement of this section may be conducted through the county clerk of court  
26 or a third-party vendor. The county may also designate fire districts or parts of existing districts  
27 and prescribe the boundaries thereof for insurance grading purposes."

28     **SECTION 8.2.** G.S. 153A-234 reads as rewritten:

29     "**§ 153A-234. Fire marshal.**

30     ...

31     (b) The fire ~~marshal~~ marshal, or the fire marshal's designee, shall obtain a criminal  
32 history record check for an applicant over the age of 18 prior to offering that applicant a paid or  
33 volunteer position with the fire department. The criminal history record check shall be conducted  
34 and evaluated as provided in ~~G.S. 143B-943.~~ G.S. 143B-943, or, if an applicant has been a  
35 resident of North Carolina for over five years and reports no charges or convictions on the  
36 application, the record check requirement of this section may be conducted through the county  
37 clerk of court or a third-party vendor."

38     **SECTION 8.3.** G.S. 160A-292 reads as rewritten:

39     "**§ 160A-292. Duties of fire chief.**

40     ...

41     (b) The fire ~~chief~~ chief, or the fire chief's designee, shall obtain a criminal history record  
42 check for an applicant over the age of 18 prior to offering that applicant a paid or volunteer  
43 position with the fire department. The criminal history record check shall be conducted and

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1 evaluated as provided in ~~G.S. 143B-943~~, G.S. 143B-943, or, if an applicant has been a resident  
2 of North Carolina for over five years and reports no charges or convictions on the application,  
3 the record check requirement of this section may be conducted through the county clerk of court  
4 or a third-party vendor."

5       **SECTION 9.** Sections 1 and 2 of this act become effective October 1, 2024, and  
6 apply to contracts issued, renewed, or amended on or after that date. Section 4 of this act becomes  
7 effective October 1, 2024, and applies to notices of foreclosure sale filed with the clerk of  
8 superior court on or after that date. Section 5 of this act becomes effective October 1, 2024, and  
9 applies to contracts entered into on or after that date. Sections 6.1 through 6.3 of this act become  
10 effective July 1, 2025, and apply to the distribution of net proceeds of the gross premiums tax  
11 collected on or after that date. Section 6.4 of this act is effective July 1, 2025. Sections 7.1  
12 through 7.3 of this act is effective July 1, 2024. Sections 8.1 through 8.4 of this act is effective  
13 when it becomes law and applies to applications submitted on or after that date. The remainder  
14 of this act is effective when it becomes law."

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_  
Amendment Sponsor

SIGNED \_\_\_\_\_  
Committee Chair if Senate Committee Amendment

ADOPTED \_\_\_\_\_      FAILED \_\_\_\_\_      TABLED \_\_\_\_\_