



# HOUSE BILL 355: OSFM to Study Future of Rural Firefighting.

2025-2026 General Assembly

<b>Committee:</b>	House Emergency Management and Disaster Recovery. If favorable, re-refer to Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House	<b>Date:</b>	March 26, 2025
<b>Introduced by:</b>	Reps. Pyrtle, Miller, B. Jones, Greene	<b>Prepared by:</b>	Howard Marsilio Staff Attorney
<b>Analysis of:</b>	PCS to First Edition H355-CSBG-3		

**OVERVIEW:** *The Proposed Committee Substitute (PCS) for House Bill 355 would require the Office of the State Fire Marshal to study the future of firefighting in rural areas of the State.*

- *Specifically, the PCS replaces the Legislative Research Commission with the Office of the State Fire Marshal as the entity conducting the study and amends the report due date.*

**CURRENT LAW/BILL ANALYSIS:** The Office of the State Fire Marshal is an independent office within the Department of Insurance that exercises various responsibilities outlined in Article 78A of Chapter 58 of the General Statutes.

The PCS would direct the Office of the State Fire Marshal to conduct a comprehensive review of firefighting in rural areas with the purpose to examine trends, problems, and opportunities confronting rural fire departments and to provide legislative recommendations. The study must include the following topics:

- Volunteer firefighter recruitment and retention.
- Funding and resource allocation.
- Interagency cooperation and mutual aid agreements.
- Physical, mental, and emotional tolls that rural firefighting takes on firefighters.
- Public education and outreach.
- Long term sustainability and community engagement.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal would be required to engage stakeholders, with at least three public hearings, one in each geographic region of the State (Western, Central, and Eastern North Carolina), and to gather public input and recommendations with a public comment period.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal would be required to submit a report and any recommended legislation to the General Assembly by March 1, 2027.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This act would become effective when it becomes law.

Kara McCraw  
Director



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