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State of Minnesota
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

EIGHTY-NINTH SESSION

H. F. No. 1324

03/02/2015 Authored by Backer and Schoen

The bill was read for the first time and referred to the Committee on Government Operations and Elections Policy

1.1 A bill for an act
1.2 relating to volunteer firefighters; expanding areas eligible for aid; making
1.3 the program ongoing; amending Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 69.022,
1.4 subdivisions 1, 3, 4, 6, by adding subdivisions; repealing Minnesota Statutes
1.5 2014, section 69.022, subdivision 8.

1.6 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

1.7 Section 1. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 69.022, subdivision 1, is amended to read:

1.8 Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) For purposes of this section, the following terms
1.9 have the meanings given them.

1.10 (b) "Commissioner," unless otherwise specified, means the commissioner of public
1.11 safety.

1.12 (c) "Emergency medical services provider" means a licensee as defined under
1.13 section 144E.001, subdivision 8.

1.14 (d) "Independent nonprofit firefighting corporation" has the same meaning as used in
1.15 chapter 424A.

1.16 (e) "Municipality" has the meaning given in section 69.011, but only if the
1.17 municipality uses one or more qualified volunteers to provide service.

1.18 (f) "Qualified entity" means an emergency medical services provider, independent
1.19 nonprofit firefighting corporation, or municipality.

1.20 (g) "Qualified volunteer" means one of the following types of volunteers who has
1.21 provided service, for the entire prior calendar year, to one or more qualified entities:

1.22 (1) a volunteer firefighter as defined in section 299N.03, subdivision 7;

1.23 (2) a volunteer ambulance attendant as defined in section 144E.001, subdivision 15; or

1.24 (3) an emergency medical responder as defined in section 144E.001, subdivision 6,

1.25 who provides emergency medical services as a volunteer.

2.1 (h) "Qualifying area" means all counties other than the metropolitan counties, as
 2.2 defined in section 473.121, subdivision 4.

2.3 (i) "Pilot area" means the following groups of counties:

2.4 (1) southern Minnesota, consisting of the counties of Faribault, Fillmore, Freeborn,
 2.5 Houston, and Watonwan;

2.6 (2) west central Minnesota, consisting of the counties of Chippewa, Kandiyohi,
 2.7 Redwood, and Renville;

2.8 (3) central Minnesota, consisting of the counties of Morrison and Todd; and

2.9 (4) north central Minnesota, consisting of the counties of Beltrami, Clearwater,
 2.10 and Mahnommen.

2.11 Sec. 2. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 69.022, subdivision 3, is amended to read:

2.12 Subd. 3. **Aid payment and calculation; pilot area.** For volunteer service provided
 2.13 in 2014, the commissioner of revenue shall pay aid to qualified entities located in the pilot
 2.14 area to provide funds for the qualified entities to pay annual volunteer retention stipends to
 2.15 qualified volunteers who provide services to the qualified entities. A qualified entity is
 2.16 located in the pilot area if it is a municipality located in whole or in part in the pilot area,
 2.17 or if it is an emergency medical services provider or independent nonprofit firefighting
 2.18 corporation with its main office located in the pilot area. The amount of the aid equals
 2.19 \$500 multiplied by the number of qualified volunteers. For purposes of calculating this
 2.20 aid, each individual providing volunteer service, regardless of the different types of service
 2.21 provided, is one qualified volunteer. The commissioner of revenue shall pay the aid to
 2.22 qualified entities by July 15 of the calendar year following the year in which the qualified
 2.23 volunteer provided service. If a qualified entity is not a municipality, the commissioner
 2.24 shall pay the aid to the treasurer of the municipality designated by the qualified entity.
 2.25 The treasurer of the municipality shall, within 30 days of receipt of the aid, transmit the
 2.26 aid to the qualified entity.

2.27 Sec. 3. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 69.022, is amended by adding a subdivision
 2.28 to read:

2.29 Subd. 3a. **Aid payment and calculation.** The commissioner of revenue shall pay aid
 2.30 to qualified entities located in the qualifying area to provide funds for the qualified entities
 2.31 to pay annual volunteer retention stipends to qualified volunteers who provide services to
 2.32 the qualified entities. A qualified entity is located in the qualifying area if it is a municipality
 2.33 located in whole or in part in the qualifying area, or if it is an emergency medical services
 2.34 provider or independent nonprofit firefighting corporation with its main office located in

3.1 the qualifying area. The amount of the aid equals \$500 multiplied by the number of
 3.2 qualified volunteers. For purposes of calculating this aid, each individual providing
 3.3 volunteer service, regardless of the different types of service provided, is one qualified
 3.4 volunteer. The commissioner of revenue shall pay the aid to qualified entities by July 15 of
 3.5 the calendar year following the year in which the qualified volunteer provided service. If a
 3.6 qualified entity is not a municipality, the commissioner shall pay the aid to the treasurer of
 3.7 the municipality designated by the qualified entity. The treasurer of the municipality shall,
 3.8 within 30 days of receipt of the aid, transmit the aid to the qualified entity.

3.9 Sec. 4. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 69.022, subdivision 4, is amended to read:

3.10 Subd. 4. **Application; pilot area.** Each year In 2015, each qualified entity in the
 3.11 pilot area may apply to the commissioner for aid under this section. The application must
 3.12 be made at the time and in the form prescribed by the commissioner and must provide
 3.13 sufficient information to permit the commissioner to determine the applicant's entitlement
 3.14 to aid under this section.

3.15 Sec. 5. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 69.022, is amended by adding a subdivision
 3.16 to read:

3.17 Subd. 4a. **Application.** Each year each qualified entity in the qualifying area may
 3.18 apply to the commissioner for aid under this section. The application must be made at
 3.19 the time and in the form prescribed by the commissioner and must provide sufficient
 3.20 information to permit the commissioner to determine the applicant's entitlement to aid
 3.21 under this section.

3.22 Sec. 6. Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 69.022, subdivision 6, is amended to read:

3.23 Subd. 6. **Report.** No later than January 15, 2018, the commissioner must report to
 3.24 the chairs and ranking minority members of the legislative committees having jurisdiction
 3.25 over public safety and taxes in the senate and the house of representatives, in compliance
 3.26 with sections 3.195 and 3.197, on aid paid under this section. The report must include:

3.27 (1) for each county in the pilot area, a listing of the qualified entities that received
 3.28 aid in ~~each of the three years of the pilot~~ 2015;

3.29 (2) for each county in the qualifying area, a listing of the qualified entities that
 3.30 received aid in 2016 and 2017;

3.31 (3) the amount of aid paid to each qualified entity that received aid in each of the
 3.32 three years of the pilot; and

4.1 ~~(3)~~ (4) for each qualified entity that received aid, the number of qualified volunteers
4.2 who were paid stipends in each of the three years of the pilot, and the number of qualified
4.3 volunteers in the year preceding the pilot.

4.4 The report must also provide information on the number of qualified volunteers
4.5 providing service to qualified entities in comparison counties in ~~each of the three years~~
4.6 ~~of the pilot~~ 2015 and in the year preceding the pilot, and must summarize changes in the
4.7 number of qualified volunteers during the year preceding the pilot and ~~during the three~~
4.8 ~~years of the pilot~~ in 2015 both within the pilot area and in the comparison counties. For
4.9 purposes of this subdivision, "comparison counties" means counties designated by the
4.10 commissioner to include at least half of the counties that border each group of counties in
4.11 the pilot area, as specified in subdivision 1. Qualified entities in comparison counties must
4.12 provide information to the commissioner necessary to the report in this subdivision in the
4.13 form and manner required by the commissioner.

4.14 Sec. 7. **REPEALER.**

4.15 Minnesota Statutes 2014, section 69.022, subdivision 8, is repealed.

4.16 Sec. 8. **EFFECTIVE DATE.**

4.17 Sections 1 to 6 are effective the day following final enactment and apply for
4.18 volunteer service provided beginning in calendar year 2015 and for aid payable in calendar
4.19 year 2016 and following years. Section 7 is effective the day following final enactment.

APPENDIX
Repealed Minnesota Statutes: 15-2996

69.022 VOLUNTEER RETENTION STIPEND AID PILOT.

Subd. 8. **Sunset.** This section expires for aid payable after calendar year 2017, except that the reporting requirement in subdivision 6 remains in effect through 2018.