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SENATE BILL NO. 233

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE

(Proposed by the Senate Committee on Commerce and Labor on February 12, 2026)

(Patron Prior to Substitute—Senator Head)

A BILL to direct the Department of Fire Programs to convene a work group to evaluate the funding formula for the distribution of aid to localities through the Fire Programs Fund; report.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. *§ 1. That the Department of Fire Programs (the Department) shall establish a work group to evaluate the funding formula for the distribution of aid to localities through the Fire Programs Fund established in § 38.2-401 of the Code of Virginia. The work group shall include representatives from the Department of Planning and Budget, the Virginia Fire Services Board, the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, the Virginia State Firefighters Association, the Virginia Professional Fire Fighters Association, the Virginia Association of Counties, the Virginia Municipal League, the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations, the House Committee on Appropriations, and such other stakeholders as the Department deems appropriate. In conducting the evaluation, the work group shall consider (i) a survey of the fiscal distress of each locality providing firefighting services, (ii) a survey of the population and total square mileage of each locality providing firefighting services, (iii) best practices and funding formulas employed by other states to fund firefighting services, and (iv) recommendations for changes to the funding formula for the distribution of aid to localities that more equitably address the needs of less populated and rural localities. The Department shall submit a report on the work group's findings and recommendations to the Chairs of the Senate Committees on Commerce and Labor and Finance and Appropriations and the House Committees on Labor and Commerce and Appropriations by November 1, 2026.*