

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

RS24515C1

This bill addresses the nearly impossible burden of proving occupational diseases associated with firefighting within the workers compensation system. Research has established that firefighters are significantly more likely to develop certain types of cancer than the general population. Under current law, the burden of proof for these known occupational diseases is nearly impossible to overcome as exposures are chronic, occur over long periods of time, and are uncertain regarding specific toxins and carcinogens present at any given structure fire. This bill would change existing workers compensation law so that it would be presumed that such diseases were occupationally related unless medical evidence showed otherwise.

FISCAL NOTE

The National Council on Compensation Insurance (NCCI) "expects that the enactment of such presumptions will result in increases in workers compensation; however the extent of such increases is difficult to estimate due to significant data limitations, which include the scope of data reported to NCCI and the conflicting results of published studies on occupational disease and firefighters". There is no impact on the General Fund.

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