

Department of Planning and Budget

2023 Fiscal Impact Statement

1. Bill Number: HB2451ER

House of Origin ☐ Introduced ☐ Substitute ☐ Engrossed

Second House ☐ In Committee ☐ Substitute ☒ Enrolled

2. Patron: O'Quinn

3. Committee: Passed both houses.

4. Title: Firefighters; training; electric vehicle fires.

5. Summary: The bill requires the Executive Director of the Department of Fire Programs to develop a training program on the risks of fires in electric vehicles (EV) and how to safely and effectively manage such fires to be completed by all firefighters, including volunteer firefighters. The bill also requires all firefighters, including volunteer firefighters, to complete such training program. It also requires the Director to make such training programs available by July 1, 2024. The provisions of the bill requiring all firefighters to complete such training program have a delayed effective date of July 1, 2024, and every person engaged in firefighting activities on July 1, 2024, to complete such training program by December 1, 2025.

6. Budget Amendment Necessary: Yes. Item 419.

7. Fiscal Impact Estimates: Final (see Item 8).

8. Fiscal Implications: According to the Department of Fire Programs (VD FP), there are approximately 40,000 firefighters that would be subject to the required electric vehicle fire training course as proposed in this bill. VD FP has identified an existing EV fire safety online training course provided by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) which costs \$29.95 per student and estimates a total cost of \$1.2 million to have all firefighters statewide complete the course. This estimated cost does not include costs associated with contracting with the NFPA or the logistics of verifying those certifications. However, the agency is uncertain as to whether the use of the NFPA course satisfies the intent of the proposed legislation, as it specifically directs VD FP to develop the training.

Because the provisions of the proposal do not specify the length of training nor the method of delivery, the agency has provided three options for development and delivery of the required training, all of which would require additional resources:

Type of Training	Estimated Cost
8-hour Instructor-Led Classroom Course (in-person)	Total estimated cost, including curriculum development and course delivery is \$886,150.
4-hour Virtual Instructor-Led Training (synchronous online)	Total estimated cost, including curriculum development and course delivery is \$463,150.
2-hour On-Demand Training (asynchronous online)	Total estimated cost, including curriculum development and course delivery is \$18,800.

Factors that the agency considered when estimating the costs of these options include current staffing levels, of which the agency has two positions responsible for curriculum development for training programs delivered to firefighters. Given the current workload of these existing positions, the agency anticipates the need for an additional staff member dedicated to training course development to ensure that the required training course is developed and delivered within the timeframe provided by the proposal. The agency estimates that this position would incur an annual cost of \$85,000 for salary and benefits. Additional factors taken into consideration for the cost estimates include: the number of hours necessary to develop the courses; subject matter expert review; and training of instructors to deliver the courses to firefighters. According to the VDFP, the ongoing costs will depend on the selected method of training delivery option (see above), the influx of new firefighters, and how often a refresher course is made available.

9. Specific Agency or Political Subdivisions Affected: Department of Fire Programs.

10. Technical Amendment Necessary: No.

11. Other Comments: None.