



MINNESOTA BOARD OF FIREFIGHTER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
445 MINNESOTA STREET, SUITE 146
SAINT PAUL, MN 55101
TELEPHONE: 651-201-7259 FAX: 651-215-0525
EMAIL: FIRE-TRAINING.BOARD@STATE.MN.US
WEBSITE: WWW.MBFTE.ORG

April 7, 2025

To: MN House Public Safety Committee
Re: Proposed Budget Amendment Written Testimony

Dear Chair Moller, Chair Novotny, and Committee Members,

This proposed amendment is to add \$2 million annually from the Fire Safety Account to fund firefighter training and education. Funds are made available to all fire departments in Minnesota through a reimbursement program that has been developed and overseen by the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education (MBFTE); the Department of Public Safety currently serves as the fiscal agent for the MBFTE. This proposal includes the hiring of 1 new FTE to improve internal controls and oversight of licensing and reimbursements from the MBFTE.

The MBFTE is statutorily granted powers and duties in 299N.02 which directly tie to this proposal. The MBFTE is charged with reviewing fire service training needs and making recommendations on training to Minnesota fire service organization, establishing standards for educational programs for the fire service and developing procedures for continuing oversight of the program, establishing qualifications for fire service training instructors, maintaining a list of qualified instructors, and licensing full-time firefighters and volunteer firefighters.

The MBFTE previously submitted a proposal for an increase in funding to \$7.5 million for the 2024-2025 biennium budget. That request was partially approved, and the funding increased from \$4.5 million to \$5.5 million. This proposal aims to address the need to provide sufficient funding to support firefighter training needs as identified in the MBFTE 2016 Strategic Plan. The three-year average of requested reimbursements throughout Minnesota in FY21-23 was \$7.75 million.

This proposal was developed with consideration from the 2016 MBFTE Strategic Plan and the State Fire Marshal (SFM) 2022-2027 Strategic Plan. One initiative from the 2016 MBFTE Strategic Plan is to "Improve access to funding for all fire departments". A strategy for this initiative is to "maintain training reimbursement funding level of at least \$200/firefighter." This proposal provides funding to meet the \$200/firefighter funding level.

This proposal aligns with activities and initiatives from Priority 3 of the 2022-27 SFM Strategic Plan. This proposal also includes 1 new FTE to increase capacity for internal controls and review of activities for the MBFTE. This is in response to the Office of Legislator Audit Performance Audit report from March 2024.

The funding for this proposal comes from a special revenue account: the Fire Safety Account. 100% of the request is to come from the Fire Safety Account.

Please consider amending the MN House Public Safety budget to include the addition of \$2 million annually to the Minnesota Board of Firefighter Training and Education.

Respectfully submitted,

Dean Wrobbel, MBFTE Board Chair