

## Transfer Fire Protection Fees to Dedicated Account

### Minnesota Statutes, Section 299M.10

HF2606/Huot and SF2484/Pappas

#### Goal:

Increase Fire Protection staffing in State Fire Marshal Division (SFMD) to reduce turnaround time for plan reviews and inspections by moving the funds received from sprinkler permits, licenses certificates and fines from the state general fund into a dedicated account in the SFMD to be used solely to operate the State Fire Marshal Fire Protection Program.

#### Suggested Language:

Revise Minnesota Statutes, Section 299M.10 to read:

The fees and penalties collected under this chapter, ~~except as provided in section [299M.07](#),~~ must be deposited in the state treasury and credited to a state fire marshal dedicated account in the special revenue fund. All money in the state fire marshal account is annually appropriated to the commissioner of public safety to administer this program ~~the general fund~~. Money received by the State Fire Marshal Division in the form of gifts, grants, reimbursements, or appropriation from any source for the administration of this chapter ~~must also be deposited in the state treasury and credited to the general fund~~.

#### Rationale:

Funds received from this public safety program (\$480,000-\$500,000) should be used for the maintenance and enhancement of the public safety purpose. The original legislation proposed the program to have 7 staff positions (one supervisor, 5 plan reviewer/inspectors, and one clerical support).

*At the time of the inception of the program (1992/1993), the state faced financial difficulties to pay for a lawsuit (Cambridge State Bank), and fees in dedicated accounts were swept up and diverted to pay for that lawsuit.*

Current fire protection program is funded through a \$600,000 appropriation out of the Fire Safety Account Revenue and provides just 4.5 positions (0.5 FTE supervisor, 3 plan reviewer/inspectors, and one clerical support). The transfer of fee revenue, etc. will allow the program to have the staffing that was originally contemplated. This would allow the State Fire Marshal Division to perform more investigations of license violations and substandard work and to provide additional training for the industry, municipal code officials and fire service personnel.

While a 2-3 week backlog is considered acceptable, they are seeing backlogs as high as 8-10 weeks. Further, the volume of plans, and lack of staff keeps the plan reviewers at their desks, leaving little time to get out in the field for inspections.

#### National Fire Sprinkler Association-Minnesota Chapter (NFSA)

Tom Brace Tom Brace [brace@nfsa.org](mailto:brace@nfsa.org) 651-644-7800

Sherry Munyon [smunyon@capitolaccess.us](mailto:smunyon@capitolaccess.us) 612-723-4245

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