



STATE OF NEW MEXICO
Department of Homeland Security and
Emergency Management

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Governor

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Fire Protection Grant Fund passes House with bipartisan support

The bill now goes to Gov. Lujan Grisham for signature

Santa Fe, NM – Early this morning, the New Mexico House passed SB 256 with unanimous, bipartisan support. Sponsored by Senator Burt and Representative Armstrong, the bill enables fire departments across New Mexico to access 100% of the capital in the Fire Protection Fund, allowing departments to purchase essential tools like firetrucks, water tanks, and PPE. Having unanimously passed the Senate, the bill now goes to Governor Lujan Grisham for signature.

“This is a game-changer for our firefighters,” said **DHSEM Secretary Bianca Ortiz-Wertheim**. “Before this bill, state law required that most of the Fire Protection Fund revert back to the General Fund, which left dozens of New Mexico fire departments without the funding they need. IN FY21 alone, firefighters lost out on \$13 million in possible funding. Now, that money can go where it is most-needed and where it can do the most good.”

With better-funded fire departments, many New Mexicans may also benefit from lower home insurance premiums. In 2020, for example, the Ranchvale Fire Department in Curry County bought a dedicated water system with capital from the Fire Protection Fund. In turn, this purchase helped to significantly improve the area’s ISO rating – a key metric that insurers use to set prices.

“The passage of SB 256 will greatly assist the New Mexico fire service, especially our rural volunteer fire departments who will benefit most from the additional funding,” said **Interim State Fire Marshal John Kondratick**. “This will better protect our communities and reduce insurance rates for consumers. It is definitely a win-win for everyone.”

“I want to thank the Legislature, and Senator Burt in particular, for passing this important legislation,” said **Superintendent of Insurance Russell Toal**. “My appreciation to DHSEM and fire agencies across our state for their efforts. The OSI was honored to be among the advocates. “

SB 256 is the companion bill to HB 238, sponsored by Representatives Armstrong and Small, which passed both the House and the Senate by unanimous votes earlier this month. Together, these bills represent a truly bipartisan effort to improve the lives of each and every New Mexican.

“My thanks go out to the all legislators who worked so hard on this bill, the fire chiefs and fire marshals who showed up to advance this cause, and the Governor for her steady leadership throughout this process,” added Ortiz-Wertheim. “In times of crisis, it means so much that New Mexicans can come together and support the frontline heroes who risk their lives every day to keep us safe.”

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DHSEM works to protect the people of New Mexico and the nation through a comprehensive and coordinated program of mitigating hazards, preparing for emergencies, preventing attacks, and recovering from disasters.