



Legislative Bulletin.....April 3, 2008

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H.R. 4847—United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008 and Amendments

Summary of the Bill Under Consideration Today:

Total Number of New Government Programs: 0

Total Cost of Discretionary Authorizations: \$70 million in FY 2009 and \$292 million over the FY 2009 through 2013 period.

Effect on Revenue: \$0

Total Change in Mandatory Spending: 0

Total New State & Local Government Mandates: 0

Total New Private Sector Mandates: 0

Number of Bills Without Committee Reports: 0

Number of Reported Bills that Don't Cite Specific Clauses of Constitutional Authority: 1

**H.R. 4847—United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008
(*Mitchell, D-AZ*)**

Order of Business: The bill is scheduled to be considered on Thursday, April 3, 2008, subject to a structured rule ([H.Res. 1071](#)) making three amendments in order (summarized below).

Summary: H.R. 4847 would reauthorize the U.S. Fire Administration (USFA) at \$292 million for USFA programs over the FY 2009 through FY 2012 period. Below is a comparison between the funding authorization levels in H.R. 4847 and the funding levels in the last USFA reauthorization bill.

Authorized funding levels in the U.S. Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2003		Authorized funding levels in the U.S. Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2007	
2005	\$63 million	2009	\$70 million
2006	\$64 million	2010	\$72 million
2007	\$66 million	2011	\$74 million
2008	\$68 million	2012	\$76 million

In addition to providing funding for the USFA, H.R. 4847 would expand the training activities carried out by the National Fire Academy (NFA) to include training for fighting large scale fires, multiple fires in a general area, wildland fires, port fires, and urban fires. The bill would also require the USFA’s administrator to detail any changes to the NFA’s curriculum in every third USFA annual report. To carry out its training program, H.R. 4847 would allow the NFA to enter into contracts with qualified organizations to provide on-site training for firefighters.

H.R. 4847 would authorize up to \$5 million of appropriated funds for the USFA administrator to update the National Fire Incident Reporting System to an Internet-based system with real-time reporting capabilities.

H.R. 4847 would allow the USFA administrator to provide fire technology assistance and research to address fire prevention and control in areas at a high risk for wildfires. The bill also requires the administrator to make USFA funded, fire-related research available to the public via the Internet.

The bill would require the administrator to promote the adoption of national voluntary consensus standards for firefighter’s health and safety by educating firefighters about such standards. H.R. 4847 would also require the administrator to encourage state and local governments to adopt such standards.

Finally, H.R. 4847 would require the USFA, to the extent practicable, to utilize existing government programs, data, information, and facilities to carry out its duties. To that end, the bill would require the administrator to provide liaisons to state and local governments, agencies, and departments related to fire prevention and control or emergency medical services.

Additional Background: The USFA is a federal agency within the Department of Homeland Security’s (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) focused on reducing “life and economic losses due to fire and related emergencies, through leadership, advocacy, coordination and support.” Established in 1974, the USFA offers training services to local emergency responders, awards grants for research and educational programs, and develops response tactics for firefighters. At its inception, the agencies stated goal was to reduce fire related deaths by half, which occurred in 1988 when the number of people killed in fires fell to approximately six thousand. Currently, the USFA trains over 80,000 firefighters each year.

[According to House Report 110-559](#), 3,245 Americans were killed by fire in 2006 while 16,400 more were injured. Approximately 81 percent of all fire U.S. deaths occur in residences. In

addition, the USFA reports that property damage and loss that occurred in 2006 as a result of fire totaled over \$11 billion. In addition, the USFA states that an average of 100 firefighters are killed in the line of duty annually. Of the 1.6 million fires reported in 2006, an estimated 31,000 were intentionally set and resulted in the deaths of 305 civilians.

According to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the USFA is performing adequately. OMB states that the USFA, “the program serves a specific need and has expanded services to address a wide range of hazards. Thus, a clarification of the program’s purpose to avoid overlap and confusion would be beneficial as the program continues to expand.” For the OMB’s complete evaluation of the USFA, visit the program assessment page: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/expectmore/summary/10003627.2006.html>.

Committee Action: H.R. 4847 was introduced on December 19, 2007, and referred to the Committee on Science and Technology’s Subcommittee on Technology and Innovation. On February 7, 2008, the subcommittee held a mark-up and forwarded the bill to the full committee, as amended, by voice vote. On February 27, 2008, a full committee mark-up was held and the bill was reported, as amended, by voice vote.

Administration Position: A Statement of Administration Policy (SAP) was not available at press time

Cost to Taxpayers: According to CBO, H.R. 4847 would authorize \$70 million in FY 2009 and \$292 million over the FY 2009 through 2013 period.

Does the Bill Expand the Size and Scope of the Federal Government? No.

Does the Bill Contain Any New State-Government, Local-Government, or Private-Sector Mandates? No.

Does the Bill Comply with House Rules Regarding Earmarks/Limited Tax Benefits/Limited Tariff Benefits? The Science and Technology, in [House Report 110-559](#), states that, “H.R. 4847 does not contain any congressional earmarks, limited tax benefits, or limited tariff benefits as defined in clause 9 of rule XXI.”

Constitutional Authority: The Science and Technology, in [House Report 110-559](#), cites constitutional authority in Article I, Section 8, but does not cite a specific clause. However, House Rule XIII, Section 3(d)(1), requires that all committee reports contain a statement citing the *specific* powers granted to Congress in the Constitution to enact the law proposed by the bill or joint resolution. [*emphasis added*]

Amendments Made in Order Under the Rule

Order of Business: H.R. 4847, the United States Fire Administration Reauthorization Act of 2008, is scheduled to be considered on the House floor on Thursday, April 3, 2008, subject to a structured rule ([H.Res. 1071](#)) making the following three amendments in order, each debatable for 10 minutes.

Pascrell (D-NJ): Authorizes the administrator of the USFA, working through the National Fire Academy Training Program, to train firefighters in response, tactics, and strategies for dealing with national catastrophes, including terrorist-caused national catastrophes and incidents that involve weapons of mass destruction.

Sali (R-ID): Requires the administrator of the USFA to provide information and training to relevant federal departments and agencies on the importance of clearing biomass in wildland areas of federal lands to promote the safety of firefighters. Wildland biomass, such as cut logs, small diameter trees and woody brush, is often responsible for the spread of wildfires.

Langevin (D-RI): States that “Congress supports the recommendations of the United States Fire Administration regarding the adoption of fire sprinklers in commercial buildings and educational programs to raise awareness of the importance of installing fire sprinklers in residential buildings.” On March 28, 2008, USFA administrator Gregory Cade announced the USFA’s formal position that “all homes should be equipped with smoke alarms and automatic fire sprinklers.’

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