

independent fire protection districts in the state. The Law authorizes districts to deliver a range of fire and emergency services, such as fire suppression, rescue response, and emergency medical services (EMS). Such districts are often relied upon in rural, suburban, and unincorporated areas where service demands differ from incorporated cities.

As noted in the Assembly Emergency Management Committee's analysis of this bill:

A recurring issue under the [Law] is long-term fiscal sustainability. Service demands have expanded over time to include EMS calls, wildfire response, all-risk emergencies, and resilience planning, while many districts depend on revenues constrained by statewide tax rules and local voter approvals...

Property tax revenues and general fund dollars often do not fully cover these expanding service demands, especially as call volumes rise and equipment and labor costs increase. As a result, some jurisdictions use first responder fees as a targeted cost-recovery mechanism tied to actual medical incidents rather than relying solely on broad-based taxes.

This bill prohibits a board from charging a fee to a member of the public for (a) calling 911 or (b) emergency responders arriving at a location or otherwise responding to a 911 call unless emergency services are provided.

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