



Howard County

Internal Memorandum

Subject: Testimony & Fiscal Impact Statement
Council Bill 39-2014

To: Lonnie R. Robbins
Chief Administrative Officer

From: William F. Goddard, Chief
Department of Fire and Rescue Services

Date: June 26, 2014

Council Bill No. 39-2014 will provide enhanced benefits to eligible Howard County volunteer Firefighters/EMTs through the Length of Service Program (LoSAP). These enhancements include:

- A change in the calculation of the monthly payment to allow for periodic cost-of-living increases;
- Language which explains how the maximum monthly benefit will be calculated;
- The addition of a burial benefit;
- A provision for short-term survivor benefits; *and*
- An adjustment to the definition of military service and associated service credit.

This legislation also proposes a new eligibility requirement for an increase in monthly benefits and other minor modifications to provisions in existing Code that will streamline program reporting to reflect current practice.

The LoSAP program began in Howard County in 1974. Volunteers who had attained the age of 50 and provided 25 years of creditable service according to program guidelines were eligible for a monthly payment of \$100. That monthly amount increased to \$125 in the mid-80's and to \$200 sometime around 2000- 2001. In 2008, the monthly benefit was increased to \$250 and an additional \$10 monthly payment was instituted for members who provided continued years of service.

There are currently 92 volunteers eligible to receive LoSAP benefits in Fiscal Year 2015. Effective January 1, 2015, these individuals will receive an average base monthly payment increase of \$228 per month with the actual increase dependent on the individual's years of service. Based on current information, the Department of Fire and Rescue Services has projected the cost increase on a monthly basis will be \$20,696 and the annual increase will be \$248,152 for a total projected 12-month program cost of \$609,152.

Council Bill 39-2014 has the support of each member of Howard County Volunteer Firemen's Association's Executive Board which includes the Chiefs and Presidents of all six volunteer corporations in Howard County.