

To the Editor;

Take a close look at your homeowners and commercial insurance premium notice. You will find a line item, that equals .065% of your premium, labeled Minnesota Fire Safety Account.

This account was created by the legislature in 2006 was intended to be used exclusively for the fire service. Under the authority of an independent board, the funds in the fire safety account have been used to cover the operating costs of the State Fire Marshal's office, to provide firefighter training and to provide training and refurbishment of a collection of regional specialty assets used in structural collapse and hazardous materials incidents. Well, if the House Public Safety Finance Committee has their way, the fire safety account will become just another tax.

Following the Governor's lead the Public Safety Finance Committee voted 12-3 today to wipe out most of the fire safety account in an attempt to balance the budget. In a state that already ranked 47<sup>th</sup> in the nation for firefighter training, reducing the allocation to the fire service will put response and readiness at risk.

The action today is particularly concerning not just as a firefighter but as a homeowner who pays this fee. If the legislature is going to use it like a tax they should call it one. I encourage firefighters, homeowners and business owners to get involved with the fire service by encouraging their legislators to return the money to the fire safety account. Every dollar that gets put back into the account reduces the financial burden placed upon our cities.

Respectfully,

Fire Chief