

118TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 4769

To drive innovation in developing next-generation protection for firefighters by accelerating the development of PFAS-free turnout gear, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 20, 2023

Mrs. DINGELL (for herself, Mr. GRAVES of Missouri, Ms. BONAMICI, Mr. KEAN of New Jersey, Ms. TITUS, Mr. D'ESPOSITO, Mr. IVEY, and Mr. FITZPATRICK) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Homeland Security, and in addition to the Committees on Science, Space, and Technology, and Transportation and Infrastructure, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To drive innovation in developing next-generation protection for firefighters by accelerating the development of PFAS-free turnout gear, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Protecting Firefighters
5 and Advancing State-of-the-Art Alternatives Act” or the
6 “PFAS Alternatives Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. EXPANDING THE AVAILABILITY OF NEXT-GENERA-**
2 **TION TURNOUT GEAR.**

3 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 (1) ADMINISTRATOR.—The term “Adminis-
5 trator” means the Administrator of the U.S. Fire
6 Administration of the Federal Emergency Manage-
7 ment Agency.

8 (2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible enti-
9 ty” means a nonprofit organization, institution of
10 higher education, national fire service organization,
11 or national fire safety organization, as determined
12 by the Administrator, with experience in not fewer
13 than three of the following:

14 (A) Conducting research on issues related
15 to cancer among firefighters.

16 (B) Educating firefighters and other users
17 of turnout gear on proper use, cleaning, and de-
18 contamination of turnout gear.

19 (C) Educating firefighters on matters re-
20 lated to physical health, safety, and wellness.

21 (D) Experience collaborating with other
22 national nonprofit organizations to support re-
23 search on firefighter safety and health.

24 (E) Demonstrated ability to collaborate
25 with researchers on matters related to fire-
26 fighter health and safety.

1 (F) Representing membership comprised of
2 structural, wildfire, and aircraft firefighters and
3 supervisors.

4 (3) MOISTURE BARRIER MATERIALS.—The term
5 “moisture barrier material” means the component of
6 turnout gear that principally prevents the transfer of
7 hazardous liquids, including hot liquids, fireground
8 chemicals, and infectious fluids, and contributes to
9 the overall thermal insulation of the firefighter with-
10 out imposing undue burdens or otherwise compro-
11 mising the performance of turnout gear.

12 (4) PFAS.—The term “PFAS” means per- and
13 polyfluoroalkyl substances that contain at least one
14 fully fluorinated carbon atom.

15 (5) TURNOUT GEAR.—The term “turnout gear”
16 means protective clothing worn as a main source of
17 protection for firefighters and emergency medical
18 services personnel during firefighting and post-fire
19 operations to minimize exposure to hazards that
20 cause serious injuries and illnesses that may result
21 from contact with thermal, physical, chemical, bio-
22 logical, or other workplace hazards. Turnout gear—

23 (A) includes protective clothing designed to
24 protect firefighters performing structural fire-

1 fighting, proximity firefighting, wildland fire-
2 fighting, and urban interface firefighting; and

3 (B) may also include other personal protec-
4 tive equipment referred to in section
5 33(c)(3)(I)(i) of the Federal Fire Prevention
6 and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C.
7 2229(c)(3)(I)(i)).

8 (b) RESEARCH PROGRAMS.—

9 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of
10 appropriations, not later than 180 days after the
11 date of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator,
12 in consultation with the heads of other Federal
13 agencies as appropriate, shall establish a program to
14 award grants to eligible entities to support research,
15 development, and testing of next-generation turnout
16 gear and associated materials.

17 (2) REQUIREMENTS.—

18 (A) PFAS-FREE COMPONENTS.—Grants
19 awarded under this subsection shall support the
20 research, development, and testing of materials
21 to design and produce PFAS-free turnout gear.

22 (B) PARTNERSHIP.—The Administrator
23 shall require that applications for grants under
24 this subsection include a description of how the
25 eligible entity will partner with organizations in,

1 and relevant to, the firefighting industry, in-
2 cluding organizations that directly represent
3 members who serve in nonmanagerial fire-
4 fighting roles, and how such partnership will
5 help move the results of research, development,
6 and testing described in subparagraph (A) into
7 practice, including guidance and training for
8 first responders and others who regularly use
9 turnout gear.

10 (3) CONSIDERATIONS.—In making awards
11 under this subsection, the Administrator may con-
12 sider the extent to which the activities proposed sup-
13 port the research, development, and testing de-
14 scribed in subparagraph (A) that is likely to reduce
15 the inherent dangers firefighters face, including in-
16 novations that provide the following:

17 (A) Enhanced protection against primary
18 and secondary exposure to particulates and by-
19 products of combustion.

20 (B) Reduced maintenance that includes
21 contamination resistance and greater ease of
22 cleaning or visible warning indicators to alert
23 firefighters to hazardous exposures or the need
24 for decontamination.

1 (C) Consideration of body composition in
2 development of prototypes and other products.

3 (4) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

4 There are authorized to be appropriated
5 \$25,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2024 through
6 fiscal year 2028 to carry out this subsection.

7 (c) TRAINING PROGRAMS.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to the availability of
9 appropriations, the Administrator shall award grants
10 to, or enter into contracts or cooperative agreements
11 with, eligible entities, as determined by the Adminis-
12 trator, to develop and disseminate guidance and
13 training for firefighters and other first responders
14 on best practices for reducing potentially harmful
15 exposures by properly wearing, decontaminating, and
16 caring for turnout gear developed in accordance with
17 section (b).

18 (2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

19 There are authorized to be appropriated \$2,000,000
20 for each of fiscal years 2024 through fiscal year
21 2028 to carry out this subsection.

22 (d) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date
23 of the enactment of this Act, the Administrator shall sub-

- 1 mit to Congress a report describing the progress made in
- 2 achieving the goals of subsections (b) and (c).

○