**South Carolina General Assembly**

125th Session, 2023-2024

**H. 4294**

**STATUS INFORMATION**

General Bill

Sponsors: Reps. Connell, Mitchell, Hager, Wheeler and B. Newton

Companion/Similar bill(s): 781

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Introduced in the House on April 6, 2023

Introduced in the Senate on April 2, 2024

Last Amended on March 27, 2024

Currently residing in the Senate Committee on **Finance**

Summary: Millage increases

**HISTORY OF LEGISLATIVE ACTIONS**

 Date Body Action Description with journal page number

 4/6/2023 House Introduced and read first time (House Journal‑page 10)

 4/6/2023 House Referred to Committee on **Ways and Means** (House Journal‑page 10)

 3/21/2024 House Committee report: Favorable with amendment **Ways and Means** (House Journal‑page 4)

 3/26/2024 Scrivener's error corrected

 3/26/2024 House Debate adjourned (House Journal‑page 52)

 3/27/2024 House Amended (House Journal‑page 19)

 3/27/2024 House Read second time (House Journal‑page 19)

 3/27/2024 House Roll call Yeas-92 Nays-10 (House Journal‑page 20)

 3/28/2024 House Read third time and sent to Senate (House Journal‑page 21)

 4/2/2024 Senate Introduced and read first time (Senate Journal‑page 12)

 4/2/2024 Senate Referred to Committee on **Finance** (Senate Journal‑page 12)

View the latest  [legislative information](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/billsearch.php?billnumbers=4294&session=125&summary=B)  at the website

**VERSIONS OF THIS BILL**

[04/06/2023](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4294_20230406.docx)

[03/21/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4294_20240321.docx)

[03/26/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4294_20240326.docx)

[03/27/2024](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4294_20240327.docx)

[03/27/2024-A](https://www.scstatehouse.gov/sess125_2023-2024/prever/4294_20240327a.docx)

Amended

March 27, 2024

H. 4294

Introduced by Reps. Connell, Mitchell, Hager, Wheeler and B. Newton

S. Printed 03/27/24--H.

Read the first time April 06, 2023

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A bill

TO AMEND THE SOUTH CAROLINA CODE OF LAWS BY AMENDING SECTION 6‑1‑320, RELATING TO THE LIMITATION ON MILLAGE INCREASES, SO AS TO ALLOW THE GOVERNING BODY OF A rural COUNTY TO SUSPEND THE LIMITATION FOR THE PURPOSE OF SUPPORTING A FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT.

 Amend Title To Conform

Whereas, the millage cap set forth in Section 6-1-320 hinders the ability of rural county fire districts to adequately provide services within the county; and

Whereas, to account for the shortfall and provide essential fire services, counties are forced to establish fees to support the service that disparately affects the citizens of the county; and

Whereas, allowing a rural county to exceed the millage limitation to support fire services would enable the county to cease imposing such fees. Now, therefore,

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Section 6-1-320(B) of the S.C. Code is amended by adding:

 (8) for a county council to support a fire protection district in a rural county that was created pursuant to Chapter 19, Title 4, or Chapter 11, Title 6. However, the two-thirds vote of the membership must occur no later than one year of the effective date of this item. A county council only may utilize the provisions of this item once and use of this provision may not result in a greater than a two percent increase in the county’s overall fire budget for the previous tax year. Any increased revenue resulting from the suspension of the millage limitation first must be used on a dollar-for-dollar basis to reduce fees or other similar charges that support fire protection. Once all such fees are eliminated, additional revenue must be used to support the fire protection district. For purposes of this subsection, a “rural county” is any county with a population of seventy thousand or less as of the 2020 decennial census that does not have a full‑time fire department that is fully supported by the local applicable fire millage.

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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