Connecticut State Firefighters Association

Education Committee

242 Spring Hill Road
Storrs, Connecticut 06268

State of Connecticut
General Assembly
February 9, 2010

Honorable Members of the Joint Committee on Appropriations,

Middletown, Connecticut February 7, 2010. The first fire department unit on the scene reported a gas explosion with multiple injuries and an active fire. Declaring a mass casualty incident, all available emergency medical service units were requested to the scene. Multiple fire service agencies were requested to the scene with equipment and personnel. Over the course of the next several hours more, specialized fire service units were requested to the scene. A highly trained Urban Search and Rescue task force was also summoned to assist with scene stabilization and search of this huge emergency scene.

As your committee deliberates budget reductions, please consider that none of these agencies are able to continue to exist without your support. Please discontinue the recent move to cut fire service training funds for Connecticut's firefighters. The value of this training to the citizens of this state cannot be over emphasized.

Don't wait until the next disaster to realize that you have cut fire service training budgets too far!

The Education Committee has worked closely with members of this Committee, other members of the General Assembly and the Department of Public Works for the last decade trying to provide funding for suitable facilities for firefighter training. Recent rescissions of regional fire school operations budgets have placed regional fire school operations in peril. The cost savings realized by these rescissions are miniscule. Consider replenishing these necessary funds during this difficult legislative session.

During the past year regional fire school training activity has provided almost 1,200 firefighter candidates to the Certification Division of the Connecticut Commission on Fire Prevention and Control for fire service certification testing. The state grant funding for fire service training is essential to the safety of every person in Connecticut.

Alan R. Hawkins, chairman