Valley Fire Chief's Emergency Plan

Office of the Secretary
Post Office Box 878
Derby, Connecticut 06418

March 9, 2012

To the membership of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee:

This correspondence is to ask for your support of Senate Bill 0025; in particular "Section 2(b)(2) as it pertains to "Capital construction, improvements, repairs, and land acquisition at fire training schools, not exceeding $28,200,000."

The bonding funds noted in SB #0025 are of vital importance, not only to the fire service in the State of Connecticut, but also to the lives, safety, and well being of the citizens of the entire State of Connecticut.

The condition of the regional fire training facilities throughout the State of Connecticut is woeful. Although much has been done and progress made; notably the recently reconstructed New Haven Fire Academy and the soon to be completed Hartford County School at the Connecticut Fire Academy; much more needs to be accomplished. These funds will allow for the building, refurbishing, and revitalization of the majority of the State's Regional Fire Schools. These facilities have trained thousands of firefighters, both career and volunteer, throughout the State which resulted in the protection of millions of dollars in property and saved an untold number of lives throughout the years. Many of the structures at these facilities were constructed in the 1950's with many and varied resources. The fire service has stretched the useful life of some of these facilities decades past what it should have been. Their safe use is no longer a viable recourse and not only jeopardizes the lives of the trainers and firefighters who use them; but also the citizens they protect. Some members of this committee and the legislature at large have visited one or more of these facilities and can attest to their condition first hand.

The Valley Fire Chief's Regional Fire Training School; which originated in Derby by the late Edward J. Cotter, Jr., has been without a physical facility to train firefighters for over 10 years. Presently, the Valley Fire Chief's have to travel to Fairfield or New Haven to conduct live fire training. This not only puts a burden on the school, but also to the firefighters and municipalities that re receiving this training. These two schools are being used excessively and it is being more and more difficult to use these schools. The Valley Fire Chief's continue to train firefighters using borrowed facilities or acquire old, dangerous, structures to conduct the training.

As the governing agency of the Valley Fire Chief's Regional Fire Training School, we respectfully request the committee to pass this bonding request favorably and allow for the Firefighters of the State to access viable, modern and safe regional training facilities to continue the protection of lives and property throughout the great State of Connecticut.

We would also like to thank Governor Dannel P. Malloy for his support of the Fire Service in the State of Connecticut by recommending this funding to assist by providing the facilities that we so fundamentally need to continue this lifesaving training to all our firefighters; both volunteer and career. We can not put a price on this training even if it saves just one life.

Respectfully and Sincerely,

C. M. Stankye, II

Charles M. Stankye, III
Secretary