

Town of Suffield



Fire Department
Office of the Chief

February 25, 2013

Connecticut General Assembly
Public Safety and Security Committee
Re: Raised HB # 6454

To Whom It May Concern:

As the Chief of the Suffield Fire Department and Chairman of the CT Career Fire Chiefs Legislative Committee, I am writing in support of HB #6454, which would designate the area in front of fire stations as a work zone.

Although our department has standard operating policies in place dealing with backing procedures, there are times when the firefighters are exposed to distracted drivers while performing their duties.

Currently Suffield has four stations throughout our community and three of them require the apparatus to be backed into the station from the roadway. Station 1, located on Route 168 in the center of town currently has traffic control signals. However, in my short tenure as Chief, I have witnessed two near misses involving drivers who have disregarded the traffic control signal and the big red truck maneuvering into the fire station. One of the vehicles struck the granite curbing and blew out a tire. The second swerved around the backing fire apparatus as if they were an inconvenience and drove across the adjoining lawn.

Previously serving as the Chief and longtime member of the Wethersfield Fire Department, I was made aware of a line of duty death of Firefighter Michael Mele while he was reporting to Station 2 for department training.

Each year according to recent statistics of the US Fire Administration, a number of firefighters are injured and or killed while backing fire apparatus. There have also been deaths or injuries while providing emergency services roadside; directing traffic and fire apparatus operations. This is the third leading cause of firefighter's death.

We in the fire service continue to train and develop procedures to protect ourselves while performing our duties. This law, with proper signage and public education will assist our firefighters to return home safely.

Your Support is greatly appreciated on HB3 6454.

Respectfully

Charles M. Flynn
Chief of Department
73 Mountain Road
Suffield, CT 06078