



# Erie County Fire District Officers Association

SERVING THE NEEDS OF FIRE DISTRICT OFFICIALS THROUGH EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY

Address correspondence to  
ECFDOA  
Secretary John R. Wicka  
5791 Apollo Drive  
Lake View, New York 14085-9636

December 21, 2013

Honorable Mark Poloncarz  
Erie County Executive  
95 Franklin Street  
Buffalo, New York 14202

Honorable Timothy R. Hogues  
Chairman; Public Safety Committee  
92 Franklin Street - 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Buffalo, New York 14202

Dear Gentlemen:

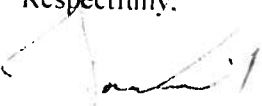
At the December 18, 2013 meeting of the Erie County Fire District Officers Association, the body went on record of opposing the imposition of fees on volunteer firefighters and volunteer fire departments associated with Firefighter I training.

We believe the imposition of these fees is improper for the following reasons:

- Volunteer fire departments and its members save the taxpayers of Erie County millions of dollars annually by providing services without pay or compensation. Volunteer members do so on their own time while sacrificing their lives in the service of others.
- Volunteer fire departments often undertake a great amount of time raising funds to supplement their operating budgets by sponsoring fund raising activities such as Bar-B-Qs, raffles and other events. These activities are needed to keep the departments operating at efficient levels and aimed directly at providing the valuable and life-saving services our residents expect and deserve. Being required to now divert these funds to cover operations normally covered by the Erie County operating budget is a disservice to the fire departments and its supporters.
- The enactment of this action was done without any input from Fire Advisory Board or the volunteer fire service in general. A major decision and action, such as the imposition of this fee, has a direct and critical impact on the operations of 94 volunteer fire departments in Erie County. The failure to "reach-out" to the fire service to obtain input and advice regarding this policy is an injustice, as well as disrespectful, to the goals and purposes of what we stand for.
- The failure to communicate this policy will undoubtedly cause negative financial implications to volunteer fire departments inasmuch as we are not able to budget for such costs when planning for our operating budgets for 2014.

In closing, we strongly encourage the administration, legislature and the Department of Emergency Services to revisit this issue and take a heightened awareness of the impact and implications this requirement will have on the services and operations of the volunteer fire service in Erie County. We await your consideration and response to this important issue.

Respectfully,

  
John R. Wicka  
Secretary

Cc: Commissioner Daniel Neaverth, Jr.  
Members of the Legislature

*Any help on this issue would be appreciated.*  
